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RICHARD E. CONOVER
1904 - 1971

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Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Fred D. Pfening, III Associate Editors

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CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC., Charles W. "Chang" Reynolds, President, 1706 Wagner St., Pasadena, Calif. 91106; Fred D. Pfening, III, Vice President, 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221; Julian Jimenez, Treasurer, 1325 Commercial St., Atchison, Kansas 66002; Verne G. Fussell, Secretary, 3120 C Ave., Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402.

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

For the first time ever Bandwagon is using the photograph of a member on its cover.

Richard E. Conover, was considered the top authority in circus wagon history. But his contribution of time and information to Circus Historical Society and to the Bandwagon was great over a long period of years.

Dick Conover will leave his mark in circus history, this issue is dedicated to his memory.

A President Comments

As 1971 moves into high gear, your president can look back over the several months that have passed since June 20, 1970, as a period of time that has been extremely pleasant and very rewarding.

On that date in June we left Pasadena for the Circus Historical Society convention in Baraboo, the Circus Fans Convention and the great Fourth of July parade in Milwaukee, and the beginning of a sabbatical leave. Since that time nearly 22,000 miles have passed under the wheels of the camper and many glorious days have been spent in forty states.

Most of the large circus historical collections have been visited and, best of all, we have had an opportunity to visit with many circus historians and fans in different parts of the country. This, added to the pleasure of meeting so many of you in Wisconsin, has been a most satisfying experience.

Although the interest of our society lies in historical matters, we, as historians, live in the present and as the new year begins we must consider the activities and solve the problems of the Circus Historical Society.

Our first consideration is the rising cost of printing Bandwagon and other expenses of the society. Typesetting and printing costs have soared (Christmas issue 1969 \$1132.10 — 1970 \$1806.63) and the only way to escape a dues increase would be to reduce the size of the magazine, eliminate some features, and limit the number of photographs that are printed in each issue. Since this president does not wish to see the quality of Bandwagon decline, I have polled the officers and directors regarding a 50% increase in dues. Since there seems to be no relief from rising prices in the future, it makes little sense to increase the dues a small amount at the present

time, struggle for another year or two, and then raise them again. In answer to my request for comment two responded with an unqualified negative; seven indicated a reluctant affirmative; and three have not answered. Therefore as a compromise, when the dues request is mailed to you this year the amount will be changed from \$6.00 to \$8.00. This will also allow funds for new roster, not possible this year due to lack of money.

At a meeting of the officers and directors at the 1970 convention it was decided, after much discussion, to return to Baraboo for the 1971 convention. I have received some ideas for the schedule of the annual conventions from the officers and directors, with suggestions that the convention be held in other sections of the country. This was discussed at some length and rejected at the 1970 convention due mainly to the lack of attendance at such affairs in the past. However, it should be re-considered for 1972. I should mention that the convention pays for itself and is not supported by the dues of the members. There have been occasional suggestions that the society not meet in annual convention each year. Discussion on this topic will take place at the 1971 convention, but, at present, the Constitution and By-Laws require such a meeting.

This is also an election year and I have asked Bob MacDougall to be chairman of a nominating committee which will report at the convention.

In conclusion, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all who have counseled and advised me during the past year. I would also like to express my gratitude to Editor Fred Pfening, Jr. for the countless hours and splendid effort he donates that result in making Bandwagon a fine publication.

Chang Reynolds

Harry Dann Dead at 48

Harry Deems Dann, announcer and clown, died in Hugo, Oklahoma, on December 30, 1970.

Dann joined the Ringling-Barnum Circus in 1941 and later appeared with the Beatty, Polack, Cristiani and Ward Bell circuses before joining the Carson & Barnes circus seven years ago.

E. K. Fernandez Dies

Edward Kane Fernandez, the "Barnum of the Pacific" died at age 86 in Chicago, Illinois, on November 30, 1970.

Born in Honolulu in 1883, he returned to Hawaii following attendance at the University of Utah and opened a movie theatre. He served in the Territorial House of Representatives from 1911 until 1923. His first circus was produced in 1915. In later years he toured Japan with a circus. In the 1940s his Hawaii circuses featured big names like Clyde Beatty and the Cristianis.

RICHARD E. CONOVER

1904-1971

Circus historians mourned the passing of Richard E. Conover on 2 February, 1971. The most prominent circus historian in America; he was best known for the six books he published over a thirteen year period. In each of these works he presented a revisionist interpretation that greatly altered circus historiography.

In his first book **The Telescoping Tableaus**, published in 1956, he argued that the Five Graces Bandwagon was one a telescoper. His second book **The Affairs of James A. Bailey**, demonstrated that Bailey was a better stock manipulator and businessman than a circus impresario. His essay on **The Great Forepaugh Show**, revised the perspective of the circus in the 1880's, and showed that Forepaugh, not Barnum and London, was the best show-on-the-road during that period.

In 1965 he published his longest book **Give 'Em A John Robinson**, which will stand as the definite history of that show while in Robinson Family hands. In that work, he also told the story of the famous Robinson cottage cage parade of the early 1900's.

Two years later he published a history of **Wisconsin's Unique Heritage**. This book was significant because it completely debunked the myth of P. T. Barnum. While showing W. C. Coup to be the genius of the early Barnum circus, Conover portrayed Barnum as little more than a cantankerous eccentric. "Contrary to popular conception", wrote the Author, "Phineas T. Barnum was not in any sense a circus man".

His last book was **The Fielding Bandchariots**, which was his most scholarly and detailed volume. In it, he related the histories of the seven Fielding built circus band-chariots, the Five Graces, and the Barnum & Bailey tableau dens. His major conclusion was that the Five Graces was not the telescoper he believed it was in 1956, but rather a large tableau was a top-mount that had to be carried on a special railroad car. When a picture of the Graces in its original configuration was discovered soon after the book was published his thesis was verified.

Conover also published many significant monographs in the **Bandwagon**. The majority of these were the fruits of his research on parade wagons.

Although parade wagons were his major interest, he was also fascinated by the "politics of the circus" as he called it. This was the "how and why" of transactions between showmen. In his later years he began to reach further back into the history of the circus, and began research for a projected study on the organizational structure and the animals of the menageries owned by the Flat-foots.

Although he will be best remembered for his scholarship, his contributions to the Circus Historical Society were many. When the society was in deep financial trouble ten years ago, it was Richard Conover who took over the impossible job of Treasurer. His astute bookkeeping was an important factor in the Society's survival. He also served as a long-time director of Division One, election commissioner, and in 1968, after much persuasion, became Vice President. He steadfastly refused the honor of being President of the Society.

At the time of his passing, he served the **Bandwagon** as Editorial Consultant, the exchecker of historical fact and the official reader of proof sheets from the typesetter.

Conover was a 1926 graduate of the College of Electrical Engineering at the Ohio State University, and reached success as Chief Engineer in the Flight Test Division of the Instrumentation Branch at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, until his retirement in 1965. He was a member of the Quarter Century Club at Wright-Patterson.

He held patents on some inventions that he developed early in his professional career. Many years ago he invented an electrical circuit that transferred various sound waves to activate different colored lights. He applied this to a series of Christmas trees bedecked with multicolored lights in his home during the holiday season. He never patented this one, but he should have because "light shows" that respond to sound are a big thing with rock groups today. He enjoyed relating the time he nearly sold Sally Rand on the use of his musical lighting system for use as a background in her "artistic" endeavor. He also envisioned the lights on swinging ladders in an aerial routine above the hippodrome track, and discussed this idea with his friend, Henry North on the big show.

He was a craftsman. Together with his sons, he built his home in Xenia, Ohio, that provided warm atmosphere and hospitality to numerous circus historians and performers. He also built the camper that was always present at Baraboo and Milwaukee around the end of June each year.

In his avocation of the circus, he was also a craftsman, a master craftsman. His work was always characterized by its tightly argued thesis, and accuracy. Most of his essays were the result of at least a decade of research. For example, much of the material used in his book on the John Robinson Circus has been discovered as long as twenty years before he disclosed it in print. His paramount disclosure that the Five Graces was not a telescoper had been known to him for seven years before he published it. He always attempted to exhaust all sources before publishing; he was never one to rush into print.

Conover was also one of the few historians to use primary documents other than the **Billboard** and **Clipper**. He made many research trips to universities and libraries in the United States and Europe. Perhaps the finest tribute to his scholarship can be found in the innumerable acknowledgements he received in monographs and books by other historians.

He took special interest in encouraging young historians. He corresponded regularly with them, and they often visited him at his home to debate their specialities. His influence will live on not only in the scholarship of his disciples but also in that of all other historians.

A service of memory was held in Xenia on 5 February, and many of his admirers were there to hear Johnny Herriott's "Old Showman's Heaven" read like it never will be again. After the service they gathered at his home and talked circus history, specifically parade wagons, and "politics". No higher compliment could have been paid to the man.

When William H. Woodcock, the other giant among circus historians died in 1963, Conover wrote, "the boys will now have to learn to get along without their encyclopedia". He was wrong. Now, we boys will have to learn how to get along without our encyclopedia, which we won't miss nearly as much as we will a warm and wonderful friend. Richard E. Conover, born 29 September, 1904, died 2 February, 1971. — Fred D. Pfening III

GENTRY BROS. FAMOUS SHOWS

EXHIBITION OF ITS KIND

IN THE WORLD

THE HIGHEST CLASS

by
Charles A. Sprague

Professor Morris and his Troupe of Trained Dogs performed at the Opera House in Bloomington, Indiana one night back in 1881. Although this wasn't an earth-shaking event, it was a very important occurrence in the life of a red-haired, sixteen year old lad named Henry B. Gentry.

During the Bloomington engagement the 'professor' had a violent argument with his assistant and fired him. Young Henry Gentry, who had passed out handbills for the show, eagerly volunteered his services and was promptly hired as caretaker of the canine performers.

He loved working with the dogs and was soon handling every aspect of the performance, while the professor spent most of his time (and money) at numerous pubs along the way. This precarious association lasted almost seven years. It ended when Henry loaned Professor Morris his hard-earned life savings of almost \$700, whereupon the professor did a most convincing disappearing act.

Twenty-three year old Henry B. Gentry returned to Bloomington, gathered together all of the stray dogs that he could find, and began to train them. Years later he recalled, "I remember three of these dogs named Colonel, Shep, and Barney. I bought them from three colored men and agreed to pay them fifty cents each when I took in enough money from my show. I spent about seven months training them".

Nora Stoute, a young neighbor girl, spent many happy hours watching Henry train his dogs. Then she helped him wash and groom them, and tied colorful bows around their necks for

their first performance at the Bloomington Opera House on May 24, 1887. This performance was preceeded by a grand parade around the court house square. The parade consisted of a rented team of horses pulling an open phaeton which carried Professor Gentry, replete in a stove pipe hat, and surrounded by his enthusiastic canine performers. That night the audience consisted mostly of local trouble-makers who tried to whistle the dogs off the stage. But Gentry had his dogs so well trained that genuine admiration soon overcame all efforts to break up the act. However the show was a financial disaster. The total receipts were only \$8.10, not even enough to pay for rental of the hall.

Henry Gentry was completely disheartened. But Messrs Feltus and Bradfrute, who ran the opera house, were enthusiastic about his splendid performance; and they convinced him to try one more time. They were right! Word of mouth advertising filled the hall that night, and again on the third night. Professor Henry B. Gentry & Company wound up the Bloomington engagement with a net profit of over \$75.00. They went to Bedford and had similar success; then Bloomfield, Linton, Clay City, Worthington, Spencer, and other nearby towns.

These first Gentry performances featured a canine Snyder Family (mama, papa, & junior) acting out humorous domestic situations, and supported by a variety of canine clowns, dancers, and acrobats. After each performance Professor Gentry would invite the children to come up on the stage to get ac-

This car was used around 1890 before the show went under canvas. Harold Dunn Collection.

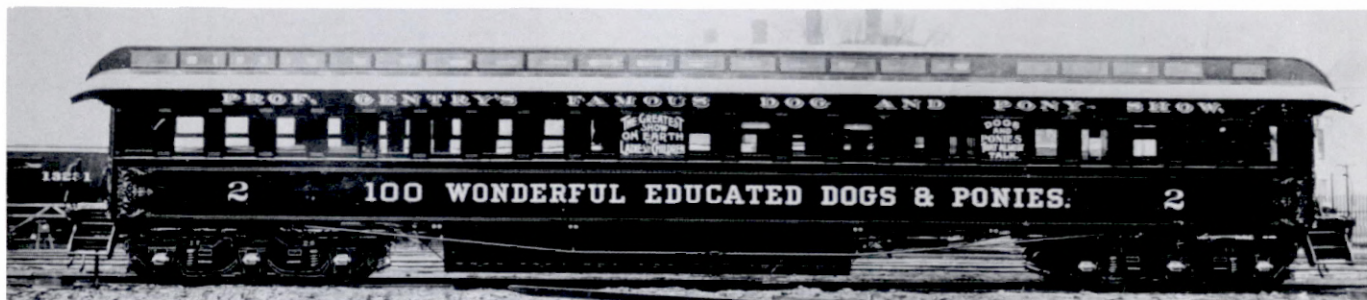


This fancy "dog bandwagon" was used for parading around 1898. The wagon is highly carved as were many of the small pony cages. Pfening Collection.

quainted with the dogs. This became a tradition with Gentry performances down through the years.

Early in 1888 Gentry ventured into upper Michigan. However he soon discovered that the miners and lumberjacks of the Iron Mountain area would rather see a dog 'fight' than a dog 'show'. This was an almost disastrous lesson, and he had to pawn his gold watch in order to get his troupe back to 'civilization'. He was so broke that he had to pass out his own handbills in Dixon, Illinois. But that engagement was the turning point and began a highly successful seven month tour of Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri, which netted a profit of \$2800.

By this time Henry's brothers, Wallace (W.W.), Will (J.W.), and Frank



(F.H.) had joined the company. They expanded the show for the 1889 season. Trained ponies were added to the performance; and they now traveled in their own railroad car with the dogs and ponies occupying one half, while the four brothers lived, slept, and cooked in the other. Still playing in halls, they toured the eastern states using the title Professor H. B. Gentry's Famous Company of Dogs and Ponies. They played Johnstown, Pennsylvania the day before the great flood. At the close of the 1889 tour the Gentrys purchased a forty acre farm on the south edge of Bloomington which served as their winter quarters for many ensuing years.

The so-called 'gay nineties' were for the most part depression years, but the Gentry brothers prospered. They opened the 1890 season at East St. Louis, Illinois exhibiting in a tent for the first time, and traveling in two railroad cars. A gang of hoodlums slashed the canvas at this first stand, but the undaunted brothers patched it up and moved on. The 1890 tour covered most of the central states and netted a \$15,000 profit.

The show grew continually as monkeys, goats, pigs, horses, camels, elephants, and human acts were added. The arrival of the first Gentry elephant created great excitement among the Bloomington townsfolk. Although it was only a baby, a great crowd had gathered at the Monon depot to welcome the newcomer. During the confusion of unloading, the young pachyderm slipped and broke one of its legs. It was given immediate round-the-clock care but nothing could relieve the poor animal's suffering; and its plaintive cries were unbearable. A heartbroken H. B. Gentry had to have the little fellow killed, and the show remained elephantless for one more season.

The second two-car Gentry unit was launched in 1892; and by 1899 there were four-car Gentry units traveling throughout the country, each managed by one of the brothers. In 1901 Henry and Frank took a show to Mexico City for a six week stand. This was a highly successful venture, and they presented a pony to President Diaz during their stay.

Gentry Brothers Shows moved into the full-fledged circus class of operation in 1902 when flat cars, stock cars, and sleepers replaced the old baggage cars and day coaches of former years. Two large bandwagons which were elaborately carved with dogs and ponies, and two ornate caliope wagons were purchased from the Sullivan & Eagle Wagon Works at Peru, Indiana. The title now became Gentry Brothers Famous Shows and they played large cities including New York and Chicago for one and two week stands. During these engagements, the show train would be unloaded and the equipment moved overland from one neighborhood loca-

tion to another. An elaborate (and probably exaggerated) 1902 routebook listed a total of 72 railroad cars, 12 camels, 22 elephants, 12 sacred cows, and 50 big horses. Reliable sources indicate that none of the four traveling units ever used more than eight cars; but it is known that the Gentrys did purchase twenty small elephants about that time. Henry Gentry gained national prominence in 1902 when he paid \$25,000 for the famous race horse McKinney, and stabled him at Bloomington.

Henry, Wallace, Will, and Frank Gentry were now pillars in the Bloomington community. Elks Lodge #446 named them honorary life members, and needless to say, they were always in charge of entertainment for that organization. When Indiana University was in dire financial straits, Governor Winfield Darbin took initial steps to move the college from Bloomington to Indianapolis. However Henry B. Gentry, in company with several other prominent Bloomington citizens, carrying a 'suitcase full of money' visited the governor and persuaded him to keep the university at Bloomington. On May 10, 1907 during the cornerstone-laying ceremonies for the Monroe County Courthouse, many citizens wore badges bearing a picture of Henry Gentry entitled "Mr. New Courthouse". 1907 was also the year that Henry Gentry built Bloomington's first modern commercial building. It was faced with white glazed brick and decorated with elaborately carved dogs and ponies. He later built the city's first apartment building, and the ultra-modern Gentry Hotel. The hotel still operates as the Indiana Motor Inn. It is little wonder that Bloomington was often referred to as "Gentryville" during those early years of the twentieth century.

Many well-known circusmen learned

One of the Sullivan & Eagle ticket wagons is shown on the midway of one of the units in the 1900 to 1910 period. Tom Parkinson Collection.



Nearly 50 dogs are shown on the Gentry Show in the early 1900s. One of the twin ticket wagons is on the right. Pfening Collection.

the business while working with the Gentrys. Roy Feltus, J. D. Newman, Ben Austin, and Sam B. Dill are among those who later became proprietors of their own shows. Scores of former employees agree that their years of trouping with Gentry Brothers were the most pleasant of their entire careers.

During the early 1900s several of Gentry's key executives succumbed to tempting offers by the Ringlings, who now operated the Forepaugh-Sells, Barnum & Bailey, and Ringling Brothers circuses. As a consequence, the Gentrys cut back to three traveling units in 1904, and two in 1906.

In 1907 Henry stayed in Bloomington to construct his first building, and the Gentry title and equipment was leased to other operators. However Wall Gentry toured with his own two-car show and took it into winter quarters at San Antonio, Texas at the close of the season. The family rejoined forces in 1908 and toured two units; one out of Bloomington quarters, and the other out of San Antonio. W. W. Gentry was still listed as owner of the San Antonio unit. 1909 saw a continuation of the two





unit operation; one on nine cars, and the other on ten. At the close of the 1909 season both shows returned to Bloomington quarters.

GENTRY BROTHERS FAMOUS SHOWS had its greatest season in 1910. The finest of the Gentry stock and equipment was combined into one unit that year which toured the whole country and concentrated on playing only the largest cities. This aggregation which was managed by Henry Gentry included a band of eighteen musicians, the first Gentry sideshow, and their first full-fledged cookhouse for the employees. It traveled on fourteen cars, and Wall Gentry was in charge of the advance.

The 1911 season was marred by several vexing experiences. For some unknown reason, the opening performance was given at Bedford on April 22nd, with the intention to play Bloomington on May 24th. This left the door wide open, and the John Robinson Circus scheduled Bloomington for May 12th. (This was the first Bloomington appearance for Robinson in thirty years. At that time they swore that they would never return because the local authorities shut off their grafting). So for the first time, Gentry Brothers Circus skipped its hometown; evidently realizing that even a circus-minded town like Bloomington couldn't afford two shows in the same month. Later, at Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, fire destroyed the menagerie tent. And shortly after that a head-on collision at Pembia, N.D. telescoped three stock cars, killing four horses and injuring twenty more. There were no personnel injuries but this was

A big feature of the Gentry show over the years was the dog and monkey fire department act. This little "hose" wagon was one of the special pony size wagons used in that number. It also made parade each day as shown here. Pfening Collection.

one of the most costly wrecks that the Gentry shows had ever experienced. The season ended on December 2nd in Victoria, Texas and the show went into winter quarters at San Antonio. The show moved on 15 cars, 1 advance, 4 stocks, 7 flats and 3 coaches, in 1911.

The 1912 season was relatively uneventful. The show returned to Bloomington quarters after closing November 30th.

1913 was the year of the great Ohio River flood. Hagenbeck & Wallace suffered almost irreparable damage when twenty feet of water covered its Peru, Indiana quarters. Bloomington was completely isolated by the water for a while but suffered no major damage. Gentry Brothers opened at Bloomington on April 30th despite the fact that Young Buffalo Wild West & Colonel Cummins Far East played there one day previously. Local newspaper reviews favored the Gentry performance but admitted that Young Buffalo had a flashy parade. The Gentrys resumed two unit operation in 1913. The #1 unit was managed by Henry, with Wall handling the advance. There is no record of who managed the two-car #2 unit.

This unusual advance advertising car was used around 1911. Howard Tibbals Collection.



At mid-season Herry had to leave the show and go to Battle Creek for treatment of a nagging foot ailment.

Frank Gentry spent a hectic 1913 season as a legal adjuster on the Sells-Floto Circus. The bane of his existence was a tribe of eleven Igorrote Indian headhunters from the Philippines, which was featured in the sideshow. The chief staple of their diet was dog meat, and they had a man stealing dogs in every city where the show played. But that was only a minor part of the trouble. The Igorrote method of preparing a dog for the pot was to take a club and flay the animal before killing it. The Indians contended that by this method blood was brought to the surface and the meat was made tender.

During the flaying process the howls of the unfortunate dogs aroused every American within hearing distance. Sells-Floto was stopped cold at Sedalia Missouri where warrants were sworn out by members of the SPCA. Frank Gentry managed to 'fix' things at Sedalia, and gave orders for humane killing of the dogs. However this didn't satisfy the Igorrotes. They contended that unflayed dog meat was tough and lacked the fine juices produced by their method of tenderizing. It was necessary to keep a constant watch on the Igorrotes, or one of them would sneak off and flay an unfortunate dog until its cry aroused men, women, and children in all directions. After which the local SPCA would start its machinery into action and there would be hurry-up calls for Mr. Gentry to do another job of 'fixing'.

When the season closed, the harried Frank Gentry issued an ultimatum, stating that he was through fixing up after Igorrotes. "They couldn't have caused more trouble if they had taken up head-hunting again", he said.

The great European War was now in progress and the whole world was apprehensive. 1911 through 1918 were generally poor years for American circuses. Not only were dollars hard to come by, but there were acute manpower shortages, and endless transportation difficulties. Little is known about the 1914 Gentry season, but it is safe to assume that the going was rough. The #2 unit was cut from five cars to three during the tour. Both shows returned to Bloomington quarters that winter.

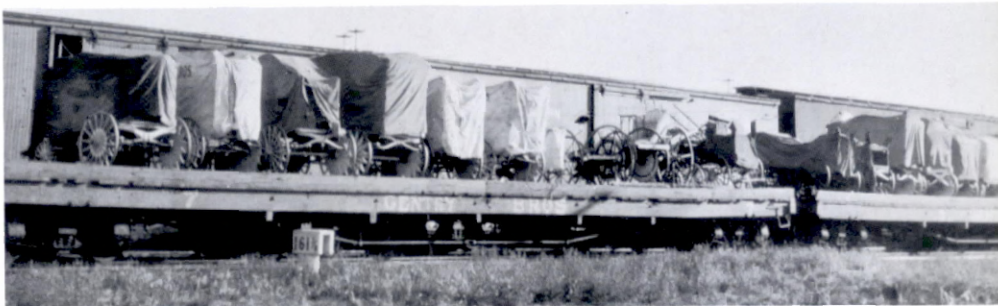
Buried among the war news in the Bloomington Sunday Star of April 18, 1915, was a cheerful little item: "A number of children from the public schools took in the sights at the Gentry Brothers winter quarters last Friday and were given a ride about town in two of the show's big bandwagons. The little people had a merry time; and H. B. Gentry, driving one of the wagons himself, was as young as any of them". (He was almost 50)

Only one twelve-car unit went out in 1915 using the title Gentry Brothers Circus. It opened in Bloomington on April 27th playing to capacity matinee and overflow night attendance. The Sunday Star reported: "No crutches for manager H. B. Gentry this year. Will Gentry is again in charge of concessions, while Frank is the general press agent. Wall Gentry was here for the opening. The show will play mostly big cities this year, making many one-week stands. Conditions all over the country are unsettled because of the war and it is the opinion of circusmen in general that they must get their money in the big cities this summer". It was a rough season! Gentry first announced a mid-October closing, but stayed out a month longer in a desperate attempt to turn a profit. The show closed in Alabama and returned to Bloomington quarters.

Frank Gentry and Henry Wallace founded the Gentry Remedy Company at Bloomington in January 1916. Dr. S. A. Bradley was in charge of manufacturing elixirs for 'man and beast'. The labels bore the Gentry Brothers trademark.

Gentry Brothers Circus went out under Gentry management for the last time in 1916, using 1 advance car, 3 stocks, 7 flats and 2 coaches. Several times during the season, Henry Gentry went to the state penal farm at Putnamville to recruit workingmen for the show. They were paroled for this purpose by Governor Ralston, and one-half of their wages was sent to the superintendent of the farm to be given to the prisoners upon their final release. How discouraging it must have been for H. B. Gentry to operate under such conditions! Clint Finney once told a theater executive that his highly publicized ushers had nothing on the old Gentry Show's attendants for neatness and courtesy. All Gentry employees wore uniforms; and no one was permitted to drape his coat carelessly over a cage wagon or any other show property visible to the public. C. S. Primrose recalled that Gentry was tops for neatness and public relations; that a one-week stand meant it was time to repaint everything; and that Gentry was the finest ever on the road, and the finest to work for.

On August 6, 1916 the Bloomington Star commented: "Circuses that met with reverses on account of wet weather last season have found it too dry for them this year. Business has been poor on account of the heat, and no attraction is strong enough to induce people to enter the smothering big tops. Parades are often abandoned because of the heat; and last week Hagenbeck & Wallace cancelled its date at Greensburg. All other conditions for big business are good, and with a break in the weather, there is still time for a money-making season". Evidently something



A 60 foot wooden flat is shown cross loaded with eleven pony size wagons during the last year and the show was owned by the Gentrys, 1916. Woodcock Collection.

more than a 'break in the weather' was required, for the Gentrys lost control of their show on December 1, 1916, following a November 25 closing in Elgin, Texas. They were victims of the times. Two former employees, Ben Austin and J. D. Newman (probably as receivers) continued to operate the show through the 1922 season.

The 14 cars of equipment owned by the Gentrys in 1916 remained intact for the 1917 show operated by J. Ben Austin and Jake D. Newman. They maintained the same performance format that had long been identified with the Gentry name.

The 1917 show used 14 cars, 1 advance car, 3 stocks, 7 flats and 3 sleepers. The show remained on 14 cars through the 1918, 1919, and 1920 seasons. In 1922 one sleeper was added. The basic equipment was what the Gentrys had used over the years. Some details on this equipment are important as it was scattered following the close of the 1922 season.

The 1922 season opened in Houston, Texas on April 15 and closed in Giddings, Texas on September 23. J. B.

The 1920 Austin and Newman edition of the Gentry show is pictured in its entirety at the Gallup, New Mexico stand in 1920. Pfening Collection.



Austin, acting as receiver following the closing, made an official inventory of the show on November 9, 1922.

The following items are listed as part of that inventory. One 90 foot big top with 3 forty foot middles; one 60 foot menagerie top with 2 forty foot middles; one 45 foot side show top with 2 thirty foot middles; 6 side show banners plus an entrance banner. One 50 foot dressing top with one 30 foot middle; one 30 by 45 foot dining top; one 20 by 50 foot stable top.

Animals included 3 female elephants, Babe, Queen and Pinto; 2 camels; 11 monkeys; 28 dogs; 3 lions; 2 pumas; one deer and one sacred ox. There were 22 head of baggage stock, 30 ring horses and 27 saddle horses and parade ponies.

The parade wagons included: steam calliope, Red and Gold ticket wagon, Yellow and Silver ticket wagon, bandwagon, dog wagon, Major wagon, Harness wagon, uniform wagon, candy wagon #25, tableau wagon #19, 7 cages #10 through 18 and cage #26 with vestibule for untamable lion.

Other wagons included the following — stringer wagon, 2 seat plank wagons, pole wagon, canvas wagon, menagerie wagon, cookhouse wagon, water wagon, light plant, jack wagon, prop wagon, stake and chain wagon and cage #22 for parade and baggage.

The railroad cars consisted of the advertising car, one 82 foot stateroom car, a 70 foot sleeper, a 76 foot sleeper which contained the pie car, a 70 foot sleeper, a 70 foot stock for horses and

and Ed Ballard offered Genery \$55,000 to continue as manager for the 1921 season. This was definitely the high point in H. B. Gentry's career, and he was considered by many to be the greatest circusman in America at that time. However he declined the offer, saying that nothing could induce him to ever troupe again.

He now returned to Bloomington to concentrate on his real estate investments. He owned much valuable business property there, and by 1922 was reputed to be a millionaire. In 1924 his original commercial building was completely destroyed by fire. The property was inadequately insured and therefore a severe financial loss. During the 1920s he also suffered heavy losses in Florida land speculation.

Henry B. Gentry resented these ersatz operations using his name which bore no resemblance to the original Gentry product. His acquaintances often urged him to get back into showbusiness; and he was particularly influenced by the writings of the newspaper columnist, O. O. McIntyre, who on various occasions reminisced about the visits of the Gentry Dog & Pony Show to his hometown. "Shall we ever again see the Synder Family?" McIntyre mused. Sixty-five year old Henry Gentry could resist no longer. Early in 1931 he repurchased the Gentry title, recruited fifty dogs from the Indianapolis pound, and took them to Florida for intensive training.

Brother Frank Gentry joined the venture, and together they hired many of their former employees, including Roy Rush head trainer, Fred Qualters pony manager, Jim Williams boss canvasman, William Carpenter boss hosteler, and Beverly White publicity director. They put together a fine little

This small ticket wagon was built by Sullivan & Eagle for the Floyd and Howard King tunnel car circuses of the early 1920s. It is shown here on the Gentry show in 1926. This wagon is now owned by Arvil Allread a CHS member. Pfening Collection.



The Sullivan & Eagle twin bandwagon with the dog head is shown ready for parade in 1921. McClintock Collection.

truck show with all new equipment throughout. Using the title Original Gentry Brothers Famous Shows, it featured the Snyder Family of dancing dogs, the monkey fire department, the



This is the cover of a courier used by the show in 1902. The prices listed on the back are children 15c and Adults 25c. Pfening Collection.

canine courtroom scene, the military ponies, and many of the other original Gentry act. The show opened at Bloomington on June 1st and 2nd, then rolled along to play all of the old familiar mid-western territory. The performance was well received everywhere but business was mediocre. (The great John Ringling was having the same trouble). However one-week stands at San Antonio and Houston late in the season produced revenue equal to that of normal times. The show closed at Galveston in mid-November.

1931 news reports indicated that the already poor business conditions were

worsening: "Automobile Companies Delay Showing 1932 Cars. Executives of leading companies agree that there is little to be gained by rushing 1932 model cars into a fading market". "Passenger Service Loss to Railroads". "Work, Not Charity for Jobless". Etc. Etc. The Gentry motorized show continued to tour through 1934, but it was a losing battle. No amount of effort or ingenuity could cope with the desperate plight of the nation. This fine old circus title accompanied Haag, John Robinson, Sparks, Hagenbeck & Wallace, Sells-Floto, Robbins, and Al G. Barnes into oblivion during the 1930s.

Henry B. Gentry, broken in health and spirit, spent his last years in Bloomington. He was seldom bitter, but one day remarked, "See that bank? I once saved it from a panic, but now I couldn't borrow a dime there". His failing health affected his mind, and whenever the business district was crowded he thought that a circus was in town and would hurry home to pack his suitcase. He died in 1940 at the age of seventy-five. He was alone, almost destitute, living in one room on the second floor of the former Gentry Building.

Wallace Gentry died in 1933 at Hot Springs, Arkansas. Will Genry passed away at Miami, Florida in 1936. Frank Gentry was manager of the Sells-Floto Circus for a time during the 1920s. He manned one of the rifles when it became necessary to execute the famous elephant Snyder, at Riverside, California. Following his trouping days, he became a justice of the peace at Bloomington. He died in the Elks' Home at Norfolk, Virginia in 1951.

Following the closing of the Original Gentry Bros. Dog & Pony Show in 1934 it was sold to Fred Bays, a lawyer of Sullivan, Indiana, who then enlarged it and opened the show as Bays Bros. Circus.

An extensive article covering the Bays Bros. Circus of 1935 and the various titles used on the equipment throughout the 1938 season will appear in a future issue.

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THE ADVANCE COULD MAKE OR BREAK A CIRCUS

By Sverre O. and Faye O. Braathen

In the early days of the mud-wagon or overland shows in our country very little attention was given to publicity because they depended upon the local populace for their audiences. The advertising was done by a man on horseback who carried all the material in his saddlebags. Since there was no paste to post advertising material on buildings and fences, circus employees during the winter season cut small pieces of leather and inserted a tack into each, storing quantities of these for use during the coming summer. Using these leather protected tacks, a small wagon show would put up some twenty-five to seventy-five posters in a town. These would be tacked up in taverns, inns, stores, livery stables, — any sheltered place where they would not be ruined by wind or rain, sleet or hail. These posters would be taken down on circus day to be re-used in another town along the route. In this manner a man on horseback could carry sufficient advertising material to last a half a season.

With the invention of paste it became possible for circuses to make use of billboards, sheds and other buildings to exhibit their posters. In 1876 the Howe and Cushing Circus had a general agent, a boss bill poster and a helper in advance of their show. These carried four bill boxes and a crate for a boiler as they traveled about the country advertising the coming of the circus. The boiler consisted of a large sheet iron tank to hold water. A stove pipe ran down through the middle of this, and wood was fed into this pipe to boil the water to be used to make the paste.

The bill poster was the engineer, and the helper prepared the paste material. When the water was boiling it would be poured into a can and the paste ingredients added and stirred as the concoction cooked to the proper consistency to assure the posters adhering to barn or shed until after circus day. The jaste

ready, the posting crew would wait at the railway station until the general agent had obtained a license to play the town. The license procured, the bill posting crew went to work while the general agent obtained all necessary contracts for the lot, water, food for man and beast, etc. Their work done, this little band of advance men would drive or catch a train to the next town on the route.

It is believed that Seth B. Howes was the first circus owner to make use of Billboards in this country to post circus paper with paste, and that William C. Coup was the first owner to make use of three-and ten-sheet lithographs. For a Brooklyn engagement, Coup made use of a hundred-sheet billboard.

P. T. Barnum, one of the greatest showmen of this country, learned early in his career that it required a tremendous amount of publicity to make an amusement enterprise successful. In 1850 to induce Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, to enter into a contract for a concert tour of America, Barnum had to deposit the sum of \$187,500 in cash with Barring Bros., bankers in England. Some time later Barnum was riding in a train from Philadelphia to New York when the news broke in the papers that he had signed Jenny Lind for a concert tour of the United States. He had not intended that the story should be released so soon, but then as now newspapers did not always wait for the "official source" to authorize the publication of "news." Barnum quickly decided to ascertain the impact of this particular news upon the public. What

better subject for his first testing of this than the conductor of his train. Surely these should be well informed in all matters pertaining to amusement enterprises for didn't they daily talk with people entertainment bound? So Phineas T. struck up a conversation with the conductor and casually mentioned that he had arranged for Jenny Lind to tour this country. "Jenny Lind," asked the trainman, "who is she, a dancer?" Barnum was then and there alerted to the need to inform the American public regarding the Nightingale if either he or she was to realize profits from her tour. He never forgot this lesson in the value of publicity and when later he turned from promoting single features to owning and managing a giant circus he transformed the highways and byways into colossal picture galleries to herald the coming of "The Greatest Show on Earth."

The glamour of a circus was seen on the day it gave its performances in a city. The average circus goer had no conception of the work done by a corps of men who traveled ahead of a show to make possible that day of glamour and grandeur. These were its unsung heroes without which no circus would even have entered a city. It was work done by these men that made it possible for the circus owner to pay everyone in his employ and to defray the expenses of carrying his show through the winter. Ironically, if circus day were a successful one the owner claimed the credit but should it prove unprofitable the fault was, of course, that of the advance men.

Long before the snow disappeared from the hills, the ice had left the lakes and streams, the grass had turned green and the buds had swelled on the trees; long before any small boy (or his dad) had thought of circus day, the owner would have gone over with his general agent the route that the circus

This billstand was used by the Stow's Varieties (Circus) for an October 1850 stand in Bryan, Ohio. The illustrated posters are woodcuts in color, typical of the period. This is one of the earliest billstand photos available. Pfening Collection.





might follow in the coming season. The agent would then pack his bag and strike out for the first railroad division point of the area first to be played. He would there go over the route with the division traffic manager to determine if the facilities necessary to transport the circus would be available and if there would be ample yard space to accommodate the show trains in each of the cities it contemplated playing within that division area. The agent would next seek to ascertain if other circuses were planning to play the region. Satisfied that conditions made it feasible for his show to play the district, the agent would enter into the proper contracts with the company for rail, yard and train facilities. This done he would proceed to the next division point, there to repeat his studies and negotiations, always to the end that the circus he represented might be assured a seasons route of cities large enough and near enough to one another to make the promise of a profitable season seem reasonable.

These contracts specifically provided that the railway company was not a common carrier of circus or show outfits. They specified that the railway company provide the motive power to transport the circus-owned flats, stocks and sleepers to all named cities for the sums set forth in the contracts. All these provided that the railroad company was released and discharged from any and all liabilities for claims for damages resulting from any negligence of the railway company or its employees.

In some jurisdictions these contracts were ruled to be void under statute or

The date of this photo is not known but it was probably taken in the middle 1890s, and is no doubt the "War Eagle", #4 advertising car of the Ringling show. Original cabinet photo from Pfening Collection.

as against public policy. In all jurisdictions they at best relieved the railroad of ordinary negligence, holding them liable for acts of wilful negligence.

After the general agent had entered into one or more such contracts, the circus would send its contracting agents to the various cities along the route. The first obligation of this agent was to find a suitable lot, one which did not require too long a haul from the railway runs and was so located as to afford maximum convenience for the circus patrons. Having found a lot that met these requirements, the agent would next seek out the owner and enter into a contract for the exclusive use on circus day. He would also seek to get the lot owner to agree not to permit any other circus to use it during the season. Should the owner consider this an unreasonable demand, the agent would agree to a contract whereby no other circus should be allowed to use the lot for a specified time immediately before or after the date his show was to play it. Not infrequently this agent would make efforts to obtain options on other suitable lots with a view to eliminating

This Pawnee Bill's Wild West advance car is identified on the end as #4, indicating that it was used after 1901 as route books up to that season list only two cars. The photo is from a route book.



competition, at least a considerable period of time prior to and following the appearance of his circus in the city.

This representative would then enter into contracts with the city whereby his circus was granted the right to play on a given date, the right to use city water, the privilege of using certain streets to haul equipment from and to the trains, and to use the same or other streets for the parade, and the assurance of necessary police protection. These contracts signed he was free to find a feed supply house willing to contract to furnish hay, grain, straw, shavings and other supplies essential to the circus on show date. He would arrange for certain of these items to be delivered to the lot at an early hour, others to be delivered to the stock cars in the railway yards and perhaps others, such as shavings and sawdust, to go to the lot at a later hour. Nor did the agent overlook the needs of humans who traveled with his circus and before he counted his work completed in any given city he had contracts for meat, bread, butter, fruit, ice cream, ice and dozens of other items.

Yet another duty confronted the contracting agent before he could pack his bag and resume his journey. He must call on the train or yard master of the railway to inform him of the date and approximate hour of arrival of the circus, to arrange for crossings for the unloading of the show, for the planking of the crossings to permit the circus wagons to be taken from the flat cars down the runs. If there chanced to be switches or signal towers that would interfere with the unloading of the circus, he would arrange for these to be temporarily removed. Likewise he would make the necessary contacts to provide the sleeping cars with water. Not until all these varied duties had been completed would a contracting agent leave a city and when at last he did catch a train for the next town it was to begin anew. But every city was different; every mayor and police chief, every feed merchant and wholesale grocer had his own approach to the handling of the contracting agent's problems or a different set of jokes or yarns to exchange. All agents for a circus paid for his transportation with circus scrip that came in books. So the season passed pleasantly and often all too quickly to suit the dealer-in-men that was the circus agent.

The Ringling Bros. Circus as well as the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circuses engaged men of outstanding ability, well informed or many subjects, to serve as contracting agents. These men did much in their years of association with these Shows to establish their reputation across the nation as solvent and honorable institutions.

In the employ of the circus owner were yet another group of agents, —

the advertising men. Had a young lad been given a choice of jobs with a circus the chances are he would have selected that of an advertising agent rather than that of either the general or the contracting agent. Perhaps by the end of the season the lad be more nearly a man in his judgment, and the work of the advertising agents might have seemed a bit less glamorous than it had at the seasons beginning, but he would not have lacked for adventure.

The first of the advertising men to make his appearance in a city was the banner-squarer. He would saunter along the streets in and adjacent to the main business districts to scout locations where men could later tack up colorful cloth banners. These had to be high above street level that they might attract attention from considerable distances. Having selected a suitable location the banner-squarer would look for the owner of the building and seek to obtain from him a contract which would allow the tacking of banners. This privilege was always paid for by passes to the circus, and always the banner-squarer attempted to buy the space with what were known as "shorts" rather than with "longs;" in other words with passes which would admit the bearer to an unreserved seat. The contract signed, the agent would note on a record sheet the location of the building, the number of banners it would accommodate, the name of the owner, the number of passes issued to him, and the serial number that appeared on both contract and passes. This work done he would forward one of these record sheets to the circus for its guidance when converting passes to tickets on show day. A copy of the report sheet would also go to the general advertising agent to apprise him of the number of banners to be printed for each stand. A third would go to the boss of the banner tacking crew that he might be able to find all the locations. The actual work of tacking up the banners awaited a date perhaps three to four weeks prior to the arrival of the circus proper, but the earlier the buildings were contracted for the less concern regarding competition. Naturally the banner-squarer sought as did his colleague, the contracting agent, to procure exclusive rights to every location he chose for the placing of the banners.

In the days of the major railroad circuses touring this country, it was granted that the volume of business done was in direct proportion to the amount of advertising done. Too, it was generally granted that the most profitable medium for heralding the arrival of a circus in any given town or city was the brightly colored posters on billboard and wall. A brilliantly hued poster depicting a pretty girl in tarlatan skirt hanging from a trapeze bar, another portraying lion and snarling



This large billboard was used by the Pawnee Bill show for the Lapeer, Michigan stand of 1900. Cal M. Gellente, operator of a Lapeer "snipe plant" is shown with his wagon holding a bill for Union Cigars in the foreground. Pfening Collection.

tiger, or showing forty dapple-gray horses pulling a bright red wagon with colorfully costumed windjammers atop it simply enslaved every small boy and little sister that stood entranced before them. The children might be too young or too excited to read the date sheet or even the name of the circus but nothing impeded their progress as they raced for home to burst into their mother or father's presence with the half intelligible exclamation, "The circus is coming! Can we go?" At that moment no price in terms of lawns to be mowed or dishes to be washed seemed too great if it assured drinking deep draughts of delight and ecstasy on circus day.

During the golden age of the circus in our country from two to five advertising cars were used to publicise the coming of this tented amusement. In the event the circus was using five such cars, the first of these would arrive in a city six weeks ahead of show date with the subsequent ones following at weekly intervals. Regardless of the number of advertising cars employed, it was always arranged that the last of them made its appearance just one week ahead of the show date. The more circuses on tour the more publicity released. When there were close to one-hundred circuses traveling the highways and byways of our nation, the countryside was a veritable picture gal-

lery of equestrians and acrobats, aerialists and clowns, wild animals and endless parade scenes. To erect these gaudy galleries every circus had to employ a corps of bill posters and lithographers. These were transported in the advertising cars, each of which provided sleeping accommodations for its manager and crew. Each car had a small private office for the car manager and a boiler room for the making of paste. Each man was given cash with which to procure his meals each day. A typical advertising car would carry a two weeks supply of posters, with additional supplies picked up along the route. These advertising cars were invariably attached to the rear of passenger trains for their migration across the country. Often bill posters would return from their days route too late to catch the car that was their home, for it had been forced to depart when its passenger train left the city. In these cases the car manager arranged for the bill posters to ride the next passenger train which would enable them to catch up with the advertising car. Every week the advertising car manager received a check from the circus to cover the payroll and all expenses of the car. He would always have to contact a friend or circus fan to go with him to a bank to identify him so he could cash the check.

Arriving in a city the advertising car manager would contact the local livery stable keeper with whom the contracting agent had earlier arranged for transportation for the bill posters around the city and for several miles through the adjacent countryside. The liverymen who were to drive the circus men about the city and country would usually be waiting at the depot at an early morning hour to pick up the cans of paste, pong handled brushes, the posters and

The billing wagons for the Al F. Wheeler Circus are posed here in front of a 1905 billboard. Bradbury Collection.



the bill posters. While driving the country roads this crew would keep an eagle eye for all fences, barns and the like where the color-filled sheets could be pasted. Finding a suitable shed or other building, the circus man first obtained from the owner written permission to slap his posters, issued the passes to pay for same, and then transformed a prosaic wall or weathered fence into a mosaic form and color which often withstood sun and storm through long summer days and bitter winter months until a circus crew sought out a farmer and his permission to out-do the previous years artistry.



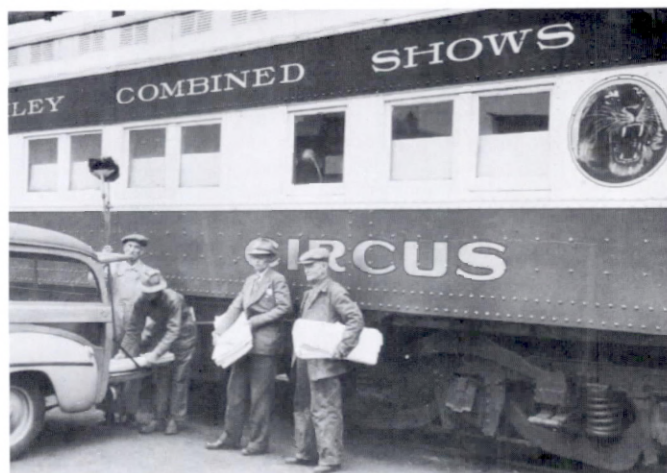
A group of lithographers and bill posters are shown here inside the Ringling Barnum bill car in 1944 as they "circused" (mixing up the various styles of paper) and pasted the date tails on window paper. Pfening Collection.

As the bill posters departed from their advertising car, the lithographers would each pick up a large roll of posters and date sheets and start on the routes assigned to them by the car manager. It was the obligation of each to select store windows that afforded passers-by good views, procure from store owner or manager permission to hang the colorful sheets, plaster each window with them, leave the much desired passes, and find another store window and owner. On through long hot days they toiled, pausing to eat hurriedly in some beanery at noon and perhaps dine with a bit more leisure before returning to the car or mayhap postponing the satisfaction of appetite until tomorrow's town was reached later that evening. The lithographers, like the banner-squarer, filed a report on which they noted the number of posters at each location, the name of the owner or manager, the number of passes issued and the serial numbers appearing on both contract and passes. These records were then dropped in the mail addressed to the manager of the second

advertising car that he might know upon arrival in the city what work awaited his crew.

The second, third and other advertising cars would complete any work that had not been done by the preceeding ones and replace any posters that had been torn down or covered by competing circuses or destroyed by wind or rain. Every bill poster kept a careful record of all pictorial paper and date sheets that had been posted, their location, name of owner, etc.

These bill posting crews developed a tremendous loyalty to the circus for which they worked, and in the days when the large number of circuses on



The country route crew of bill posters are shown loading their truck with "hods" of lithographs in 1944. Pfening Collection.

tour resulted in keen competition for territory many a battle was fought between rival outfits. In the 1892 Ringling Bros. route book we find a vivid description of such a fight in Milwaukee, Wisconsin between one of its bill posting crews and one working for the Barnum & Bailey Circus:

"We had trouble here with the 'Big City Show,' not Cleveland's but one run by B. & B., which might mean Beach and Bowers, but don't. Here Mr. James A. Bailey, who wants all the earth and a slice of the moon as well, and who thinks all the other showmen must sneeze when he takes snuff, put on his war plumes and tried to 'cut a wide swath' in our very prosperous business. 'As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,' so is the glory of Ringling Brothers to this would be monopolist. When he woke one morning at five o'clock and found the Ringlings famous, his jealous heart fermented like a yeast-pot. Perceiving they were flying with the geese and running with the wind, he dashed in their smiling faces the cigarettes of his fury. Aspiring to rule the roost and to be the king toad on the toad-stool in the suburbs of his brain there urked the thought. 'I will make crushed violets out of the famous five.' With a bravery that would scalp a cigar store Indian, he sneaked on the Baraboo foe. Like Don Quiote fighting

ers of the foe. Every stroke of the opposition was met with crushing blow or knightly parry, and the keynote of their feelings was the old Shakesperian saw:

"Lay on Maoduff,

And dam'd be him that first cries Hold! Enough!"

"Never so merry a circus was since the days of the whitewashed elephant and ten-thousand dollar girl. Here Greek met Greek, and foemen worthy of each other's steel had war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt, nor raised a flag of truce. Milwaukee was turned to a rosy picture gallery, for the knoghts of the ladder and bucket made the dead walls alive and pasted the town red. Every available awning, street car, dry-goods box and loafer's lounging place was plastered, replastered and shin-plastered with eloquent red, blue and green. In addition the press was patronized very extensively, and the many slurs of a *admirari* nature were countered most effectively by Alf T. Ringling and Coxey. As to wily John Ringling and Charles Ringling, they wore on their faces 'a smile that was childlike and bland,' and

a general air which showed they were up to mischief.

"The horrible rumble and grumble and road,

Telling the battle was on once more.' awoke the folks of Milwaukee. Ringling stock was sky-high. It was evident from the first that Bailey must play the dancing bear, and then pay the piper and fidler. It was plain to see he was getting the steam taken out of him, and his agents refusing to throw up the sponge, we awaited the knock out blow. It came. When the smoke of battle cleared, the Ringling quintette, with their legs neatly crossed, all sat on a beautiful rainbow led down to pots of gold. But the Barnum foe, with crapes on their sleeves, were seen encamped on the banks of the Weeping Water, with their harps of triumph hung on the willows of woe."

The advertising cars themselves came to carry names indicative of the wars their occupants fought with rival crews. Among these names we note The Hustler, The Cannon Ball, The Battler, The Thunder Bird, The Battle Bolt, and the War Eagle.

All circus paper came to be standardized in size and known as window hangers, quarter-half-and one sheets. A one-sheet measured 28 by 42 inches. Standard large billboards would be covered with twenty-four sheets of paper of one-sheet size. It was not uncommon for circuses to have huge billboards erected on strategic vacant lots to accommodate an enormous spread of paper.

In addition to their tons of highly colored posters, circuses frequently made use of thousands of booklets with attractively colored covers. These would be distributed to homes and business places with wild abandon.

Circus advertising cars remained in a city to put up their paper as many days as the circus was to play a city. Usually this was for but a single day, for circuses played but few multiday stands during the course of a season, — they "were here today and gone tomorrow," often to the sorrow of the children.

Just as there was hustle and bustle throughout the day on the circus lot, so there was activity from dawn to dusk and often later on the advertising cars. The men would arise at dawn and come straggling back at dusk, footsore, besmirched with paste and dust, their hands and faces showing the ravages of sun and wind. With thousands of posters garlanding city streets and country roads, there remained work to be done in the car against tomorrow's quota. By the light of dim lamps paper had to be laid out, date sheets pasted on to the pictorial paper, reports completed and mailed, and paste boiled that it might cool enough to handle the next day.

Actually the work of some of the advertising men was like a woman's, "never done." During the winter months the following seasons paper, cards and booklets had to be designed. The artists had to decide upon the colors to be used, and photographs had to be made and selected to guide the lithographing companies in the final layout to be printed in great quantities. Pictorial paper carried photographs or sketches of circus owners, featured artists, clowns, parade scenes and other attractions designed to lure the ducat holders. Special paper had to be designed and printed for cities with large Chinese, French, Italian and other foreign groups.



Frederick A. "Babe" Boudinot managed the Ringling Barnum advance car for a number of years before becoming general agent for the big show. He is shown, in the vest, with Tom Connors a well known bill poster, on the Ringling car in 1944. Pfening Collection.

Strangely enough the men who lived the hectic life incident to putting this paper up across the nation and fought pitched battles with rival crews seldom if ever saw the circus for which they worked and struggled and dreamed. Many who rode these advertising cars vowed solemnly that they's never go out another season. This did not trouble the car manager, for with the coming of spring most of his crew would be on hand for another season of arduous labor, story telling and actual wars, if need be. We have records of valient men who lived this life for as many as fifty years. Records exist, too, of the efforts made by wives to persuade husbands to abandon the call of the road and to accept employment in some more settled trade or craft.

One such tells of Tom Dailey, a car manager for Ringling Bros. Circus. In December, 1907 Dailey wrote to Charles Ringling, "I expect to be with you again

next season. My wife is strongly opposed to my going out. Now I want you to write me a letter stating you will give me \$100 . . ." Mr. Charles answered, "Concerning next season, you will remember that we added fifty dollars for Mrs. Dailey, and I think we will make the bribe a little bigger this year. We will make it \$100 . . ."

Some circus operators proved themselves to be exceedingly versatile in conjuring up novel advertising devices. In 1880 Wm. C. Coup made use of three advertising cars on his United Monster Shows. Traveling with the first of these was an enormous organ which required that the car itself be specially

designed and built. The music that issued from this organ was comparable to a brass band of the period. It was drawn over city streets by an elephant, which provided quite as much an attraction as did the unique organ. While bill posters and lithographers put up their paper on city billboards and in store windows, this organ peeled forth with raucous music. Men accompanying it tossed out quantities of handbills heralding the coming of the United Monster Shows. Some there must have been who thought the circus' name was well chosen!

The second of the advertising cars of this Coup circus had a powerful whistle attached to the paste-making boiler. Passengers of that day could not have been very critical, for this whistle shrilled constantly as the train traveled through the countryside. People who dwelt as much as a mile or two distant could hear the unceasing blast of this demoniac device. When the car that bore it sat on a siding in the railway yards while the crews went about their work, the whistle continued to "entertain." Surely there must have been few citizens who did know by days end that a circus was coming to their town.

This circus owner was resourceful in yet other ways in advertising his circus. With one of the brigades he carried a negro brass band which played concerts in the streets. Between numbers one of the bandsmen would turn spieler and tell the towns-people that assembled some of the wonders they could anticipate on the day of days.

Other circuses sent with their advertising cars steam calliopes, drum and bugle corps, fife and bugle players and other novel devices to emphasize the fact that the populace of a city should anticipate the coming of a carnival of wonders, — a circus!

As our country's population increased circus business became more profitable. With the promise of greater profits there were, quite naturally, more circuses taking to the road each successive season. The increased numbers of shows resulted in the pieces of the pie being cut a little smaller. Competition became ever keener and too often more bitter. The unscrupulous circus owner resorted to advertising methods that at times were truly vicious. Not a few circuses were driven from the road by the relentless and sometimes depraved advertising of their rivals.

In the early days of the little circus which five brothers took out Baraboo, Wisconsin, a host of pick pockets, short-change artists, shell game operators and their ilk from time to time offered the struggling Ringling boys tempting sums of money for the privilege of travel with the show to ply their nefarious trades. Without exception the Ringlings drove these cut-throats from the lots and thereby invited almost unbelievable attacks upon their integrity and honor as showmen. Handbills appeared in towns along the route describing the Ringling Circus as a gypsy camp that sneaked from village to village under cover of darkness, stealing everything they could on the way and cheating the citizens on circus day. These posters warned the public to unleash their dogs, take their laundry from the lines, keep the children within their homes and lock their doors against the coming of the unscrupulous Ringlings! As is now well known the integrity, honesty and decency of the five sons of the German harness maker won, for it did not take people long to recognize in them a new standard of honor in the circus world of that day. The efforts of their detractors were quite wasted and after a time ceased.

In 1879 the featured featured attraction on the Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Great International Allied Shows was the electric light. Their handbills and posters described the feature as:

**ELECTRIC LIGHT
THE PUBLIC MIND DAZED!
THE GREAT INVENTION!
ALL OUR VAST PAVILIONS**



Cloth banners were an important advertising medium for circuses and the "tack spitter" who hung them were a special breed. Two of them are shown here in a 1931 photo. All banners were pulled following the show date. Atwell Photo.

**LIGHTED BY ELECTRICITY!
BEAUTIFUL! MARVELOUS!
GRAND!**

Thousands of people turned away at every performance in Chicago, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Detroit. People offering fabulous prices to gain admission to the overflowing pavilions to witness the grand electric light alone.

The effect of this truly marvelous light, when it is shown under 168,000 YARDS OF SNOWY WHITE CANVAS, is beautiful beyond the power to describe it. Its soft, mellow, silvery ethereal rays shed a halo of imperishable glory over all the surrounding objects. It is indeed, HEAVEN'S OWN GIFT TO EARTH. It makes the darkest, densest, blackest night into a GLORIOUS SUN-LIT DAY! IT IS LIKE THE RAYS OF A DOZEN SUNS CONCENTRATED. And the whole world marvels at it!

To offset this strange and startling feature, competing shows made use of rat sheets. People were warned not to go see the circus with the electric light. The public was told that doctors and scientists had stated that the electric light would cost them the precious

possession of vision, — leave them BLIND!

Less than one year later, during the winter of 1880, Cooper and Bailey were again seemingly providentially provided with a wonder which startled scientists, enchanted the populace, and worried their foremost rival. Hebe, one of the elephants, delivered herself of a baby! No elephant in America had ever before achieved this distinction. Here indeed, was a marvel to be exploited to the glory of the Cooper and Bailey Circus with a correspondingly glorious increase in ticket sales!

This circus was comparable in size to the Barnum Show, and the two were bitter rivals. Barnum had always boasted that his show carried all the greatest menagerie attractions, but a Cooper and Bailey elephant had the supreme audacity to present her owners with an attraction that would completely overshadow anything which Barnum's menagerie could boast. He was too astute a showman to fail to recognize this the instant he was brought the tidings of great joy. He immediately wired Mr. Bailey an offer of \$100,000 for Hebe's baby. Mr. Bailey was no novice in the circus world and he declined Mr. Barnum's offer. Yes, he did more! He out-Barnumed Barnum. The following summer, with the Cooper and Bailey Circus and the Barnum show routed into the same territory, Mr. Bailey's bill posters plastered the countryside with giant replicas of Mr. Barnum's telegram. These posters also carried the significant statement! **WHAT BARNUM THINKS OF THE BABY ELEPHANT.**

Phineas T. recognized he had met his equal. He waved a big flag of truce, — an invitation for Mr. Bailey to join Mr. Barnum in a circus partnership. James A. pondered the offer, decided that Opportunity had opened a massive door to the future and walked through the portal. The final result of Mama Hebe breaking with American tradition was the merger of these two rival shows and the birth of the Barnum & Bailey Circus. "The Greatest Show on Earth" was destined for immortality in the amusement world and for a long struggle with five German lads who were at the time dreaming of owning a circus.

The newspaper men watched this merger and observed the growing competition between the East's proud circus and the West's struggling one. As owners of the *Denver Post*, Tamm and Bonfils were in a strategic position to learn much about the profits being reaped by these tented amusement institutions. In due time, they, too, succumbed to the lure of the tanbark trail and brought out the Sells-Floto Circus, which proved to be a profitable venture from the beginning. The title of this show was something of a hybrid, being

derived from the name of Willie Sells, who had started a small circus, and the name of Otto Floto, who was a sports writer on the *Denver Post*. Just why the name of a circus owner and sports writer should be joined is not clear but it clicked. The Ringling brothers objected to the title because they considered it to be an infringement on the title of a circus they owned, — the Adam Forespaugh-Sells Bros. Enormous Shows.



The rivalry between these two groups of circus owners became bitter. Tammen and Bonfils kept the Ringling Bros. Circus out of Denver which was the winter home of their Sells-Floto Show. Ringlings managed to procure a lot in an adjacent township only to discover the pages of both the *Denver Post* and the Tamman and Bonfils-owned *Kansas City Star* closed to them. Neither paper would accept an inch of advertising from the Ringlings and of course gave the latter absolutely no publicity.

In 1909 the Ringlings did not put out their Forespaugh-Sells Show. This allowed Sells-Floto to go into territory ahead of the Barnum & Bailey Circus, by that time Ringling owned. The Ringlings countered with hand bills which read:

**SELLS BROS. NOT COMING TO
BIRMINGHAM UNTIL 1910
OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
TO THE PUBLIC**

The Sells Bros. Enormous Shows, now united with the incomparable Adam Forespaugh Colossal Exhibition and together forming the biggest American Amusement Consolidation, will positively make a complete triumphant tour of this section in 1910 after inaugurating its season by an engagement of 8 consecutive weeks in Madison Square Garden, New York City.

Believe no FALSE ANNOUNCEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, THERE IS BUT ONE SELLS BROS. SHOW AND IT WILL NOT EXHIBIT IN BIRMINGHAM THIS YEAR.

Whereupon the Sells-Floto Circus

countered with hand bills which read:

CIRCUS WAR!

YOU LIE!

**MR. CIRCUS TRUST
WHEN YOU TRY TO DECEIVE THE
PEOPLE WITH YOUR MALICIOUS
CIRCULARS FOR YOU KNOW
THE GREAT SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS
WILL POSITIVELY EXHIBIT AT
BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY
TUESDAY
October 25-26
SURE**

In this instance, at least, Tammen and Bonfils failed to seriously injure the Ringlings, for the records reveal that the Barnum & Bailey grossed \$8,489.91 in Birmingham that year as against an average daily gross of \$7,170.52.

This type of intercircine warfare diminished as the number of circuses on the road declined and as the effectiveness of such advertising lessened. As 1939, however, the Parker and Watts Circus, a large truck show, was routed into territory ahead of the Cole Bros. Circus, a railroad show. Cole Bros. covered the countryside with hand bills which read:

**A FEW CIRCUS FACTS
WAS BARNUM RIGHT***

**DOES THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
WANT TO BE HUMBUGGED?**

For the past 8 or 10 years the Upper Peninsula of Michigan has been infested with a plague of synthetic "truck shows." Indeed there are about 60 of these so-called "Circuses" running about the country, traveling via auto, trucks, house trailers, bicycles, wheelbarrows and roller skates.

**SAFETY FIRST
WAIT FOR THE
RAILROAD CIRCUS**

Some shows would go so far as to send telegrams to city and state officials asserting that a certain competing show should be kept out because it carried with it nothing but thieves and gamblers, presenting no performance worthy of the name "circus." Another strategy employed by some circuses was to send agents into a city they hoped to play but which they had learned was on the route of a competing show. These agents would pose as traveling salesmen, complete with sample cases and "drummer" lingo. Casually they would bring into their conversation with merchants a statement to the effect that the rival circus had disbanded and would not be showing the balance of the season.

In addition to multicolored paper on billboards and in store windows, circuses enlisted the columns of the daily and weekly newspapers across this country to herald the coming of their shows. The contracting press agent rode the first advertising car and while the

bill posters and lithographers were busy he called upon the editors of the various papers. There he would contract for a specified amount of space in the paper to be devoted to circus ads, announcing the name of the show, location of lot, date of performances, and hours of matinee and night shows together with splurges regarding the various attractions carried. These ads were paid for in cash. Then he would deposit with the city editor a number of press books which had been carefully prepared the previous winter. These books were numbered and the press agent always assured the editor that the stories and illustrations to be run in his paper would not be duplicated in any other paper in that city. These books were replete with human interest stories concerning various of the circus's performing artists, with photographs of these, together with items and pictures of menagerie beasts and other attractions. Mats of the illustrations were supplied the paper. Passes exchangeable for reserved seats were issued to the editors and executive staff of the paper in payment for the use of this material in their regular columns.

When this press agent had completed his calls upon all of the newspapers in the city, he prepared a record setting forth the space that had been purchased, the tickets issued and any difficulties that later agents might encounter. This report was known as a "Squawk Sheet" and some of them afford fascinating reading today. No doubt they brought forth many a chuckle or suort when read by those to whom they were addressed at the time.

On the larger circuses a press agent was always near the exchange desk on circus day. His duties were to greet public officials, newspaper representatives and other people of note. He made certain that these obtained choice seats in return for the passes and that they were accorded courteous, gracious treatment by circus personnel.

These press agents kept their eyes and ears alerted to anything that they might see or hear that could be used as a feature story for their circus. Some of them became extremely versatile in either "planting material for publicity purposes or in quickly diverting rather prosaic happenings to such use. One year when the Ringling-Barnum Circus was playing Washington, D. C., a circus midget was planted in the lap of no lesser a personage then financier J. P. Morgan while he was attending a Congressional hearing. Naturally photographers were on hand to capture this unusual sight, and virtually every paper in the country gave the picture prominence. The result was publicity for the Greatest Show on Earth that no amount of money could have purchased.

The Library and Archives Building of the
CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM
BARABOO, WISCONSIN



The library building is constructed of poured concrete and steel with a brick facing and is completely fireproof. It is air conditioned and humidity controlled to assure the proper environment for the preservation of paper, photographs and film.

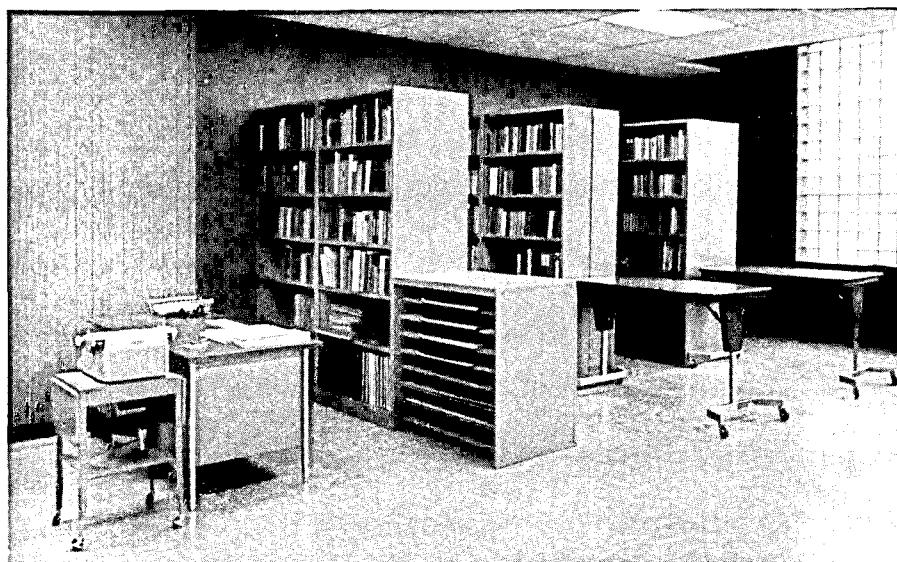
The Library is open the year-round. Our professional responsibility is to collect, preserve and utilize historic circus material. We invite visitors, but request that anyone contemplating a visit make a date in advance so we will be sure to be available.

Robert L. Parkinson, Chief Librarian
 Circus World Museum
 Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913

In the foreground are cabinets containing extensive collections of circus lithographs, route books, route cards and letterheads. In the background is work area for visitors.

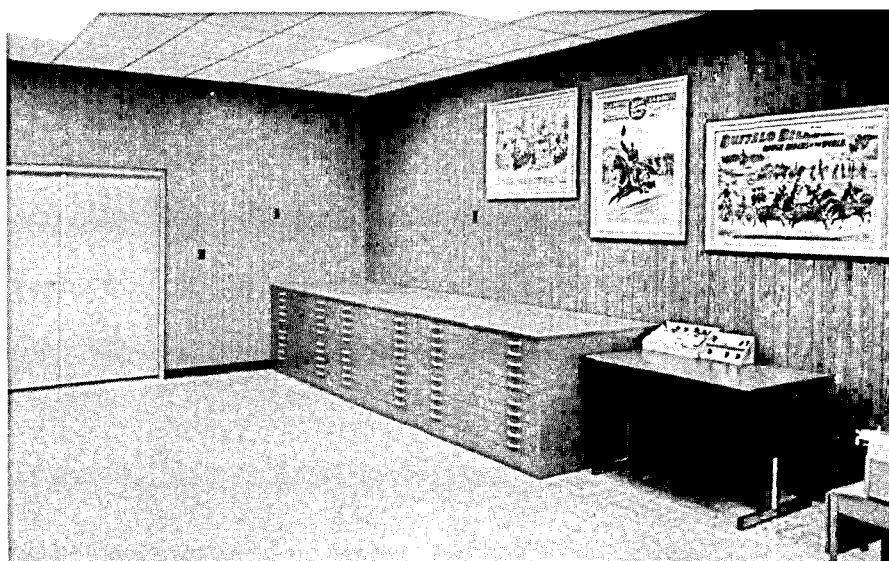


This is the office and research area. The battery of cabinets at the right contains photographs, negatives and research files.



The "stacks" contain books, periodicals and bound records of the unique and specialized field of the circus.

These files contain circus programs, librettos, songsters, heralds and couriers. In keeping with the rigid fireproof standards of the building, the paneling, though presenting a wood decor, is actually made of fireproof material, mounted on concrete walls.



Perhaps no showman ever lived who excelled P. T. Barnum in recognizing and procuring material of exceptional publicity value. When his circus was playing in New York in 1874 King Kalahaua of the Hawaiian Islands was visiting the metropolis. Now Barnum was no stranger to kings and queens for in his earlier years he had taken Tom Thumb on a European tour which proved to be a procession of parties given by royalty and nobility. Tom Thumb may have been the honored guest, but his promoter was never far from his side. Barnum did not fail to detect that though a man might sit on a gilded throne he was non-the-less made of the same human clay as the remainder of mankind and was possessed of the same small sins and vantages. Accordingly he did not hesitate to invite King Kalahaua to be Barnum's guest at his circus. The invitation accepted, P. T. easily persuaded his royal highness to ride with Barnum around the hippodrome track in an open buggy. Quite naturally this delighted the audience and probably his majesty, as well, and resulted in no small amount of publicity for the show, non of which cost Barnum a cent.

One might well say that the press department was the nerve center of the great American circus. The intelligent, clever press agent conveyed to the public information regarding the new and the unusual, the spectacular and splendiferous to be seen in the parade and the performance of the circus he represented. It was he who whetted the appetite of young and old, — made them hungry for circus fare. These men differed widely in their talents, and the names of many have been consigned to oblivion. A few were so gifted in creative imagination, command of language, and an indefinable sixth sense that enabled them to perceive what would most appeal to the public that their names live on enshrined in the memory of the newspaper fraternity and among those of use who were fortunate enough to have read and revealed in their descriptions of circudom's wonders and marvels. Few there are who will dispute that Richard F. ("Tody") Hamilton was one of the truly great press agents.

Tody Hamilton was a man of unquestioned integrity, and in an age when too often ballyhoo was made synonymous with humbug newspaper men learned they could place implicit confidence in any story he gave them concerning the Barnum & Bailey Circus. Tody was the first circus press man to set up an adjective factory designed to pour forth words and phrases that captured the public's attention and created an almost insatiable desire to see the circus attractions he so temptingly portrayed. Surely his technique must today comprise a primer for every student of

the art of advertising. Typical of his writing was the following: "Miss Isabelle Butler, a young American girl, looping the gap in an automobile. An astonishing and audaciously awful abysmal act, with fascinating, furious, fugacious, flitting flight, doubly discounting all devilish deeds ever done. Really the incarnation of ingenuity, invention, and intrepidity. It is impossible to exaggerate the extreme enthusiasm excited by this extraordinary and exceptionally extra haszrdous and emotional exploit executed in defiance of natural laws. A dreadful slap, dash, bang, fulltilt-drive, ride headlong topsyturvy jump, wild leap, furious head-over-heels, somersaulting plunge. A peerless, perilous, preeminent, puzzling, prodigious, plunge, perfectly and prettily performed." Little wonder that the lad and the lad's father found themselves filled with eagerness to witness such a spectacular stunt.



Dexter W. Fellows was a press agent with the Pawnee Bill show in 1893 and closed with Ringling Barnum in the early 1930s. Circus Hall of Fame Collection.

Tody Hamilton left the Barnum & Bailey Circus following the death of James A. Bailey. Some credited this to the fact that the press agent was disappointed because he had been ignored in the circus owner's will. Be that as it may, his going cast a pall of gloom over the Barnum & Bailey organization. The writers of all New York papers had given a big testimonial dinner to Tody when it became known that he was severing connections with the circus world. He had carved such a deep nook for himself in the various newspaper offices of the metropolis that the executives of the Circus feared his successor might find it difficult to crash their columns.

New York City was important. The circus simply had to get big business

there if it were to have a successful season. After due deliberation the show's top officials paid visits to the offices of the leading papers to ascertain what effect Tody's leaving would have upon the circus's press relations. They were assured of two things, — that the Barnum & Bailey Circus would be given ample coverage, and that every newspaper man in the city would sincerely miss Tody Hamilton's annual visit.

Early in the development of the Ringling Bros. Circus each of the five founders accepted responsibility for heading a different department of the organization. Alf. T. Ringling became the press agent, a position he filled brilliantly for many years. He was an excellent story teller and exercised real imagination in the creation each winter of the press books to be used the succeeding season. He was unique among press agents of his day in that he was an excellent photographer. Many of the pictures used by this circus in both its advance publicity material and in its programs were taken by Alf T. Ringling personally. Unique, too, was the privilege of the newspaper fraternity to meet one of the founders and owners of the circus when each year they greeted affable, likeable press agent, Alf. T. Ringling.

One circus press agent became a legend within his own life time. Dexter W. Fellows entered the circus world with the old Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. He spent some years with the Barnum & Bailey Circus and continued to serve in the press department after the merger of the Barnum and the Ringling circuses. Like Tody Hamilton before him, Dexter always found a big welcome sign on the door of every newspaper office he entered.

Dexter Fellows was a direct descendant of the bards of old. Unlike other circus press agents he was not a story writer but a story teller. After his sincere and hearty greetings around a newspaper office, he would seat himself comfortably beside a staff writer and proceed to reel off one story after another, — each filled with Fellows fascination. The staff writer would commit the story to paper as Dexter related it, and in the days that followed newspaper readers would find themselves avidly persuing the latest story to come from the "pen" of this gifted press agent.

The following editorial once appeared in the *New York Daily Mirror*:

IS THERE A DEXTER FELLOWS?

The Daily Mirror has received the following letter:

"I am a little girl seven years old. My parents have always told me there is a Dexter Fellows who brings the circus to town every spring. They read me the stories from the newspapers about

him and I always believed them. Now my little playmates tell me that there is no Dexter Fellows and that people are trying to fool me. What is the truth?" Virginia.

We take pleasure in answering. Yes, Virginia, there is a Dexter Fellows. It is your little pals, sketics all of them, and not your parents, who have been trying to flim-flam you. There is, and has been, it seems, almost as long as there have been circuses, a Mr. Fellows. He is a kindly man. He doesn't own the circus but he is its spirit. Dull people call him a press agent. Not believe in Dexter Fellows? As well not believe in Santa Claus or pixies or spring itself.

Mr. Fellows had a phenomenal memory. He prided himself on being able to remember the names of every individual with whom he had ever had any business transaction or with whom he had conversed for any length of time. We had a chance to verify this. We had given Dexter Fellows a birthday party in our circus room one year with representatives of many of the newspapers of Central and Southern Wisconsin among the guests. Two summers later on a circus lot in another state my wife spied Mr. Fellows. Shaking hands with him she asked if he remembered her. He studied her face for a moment and then he asked her for the first letter of her last name. The instant she told him he said, "Oh, yes. You are the wife of attorney Braathen of Madison, Wisconsin. I shall never forget the party you two gave for me in that enchanting circus room of yours." Faye then ventured to ask Dexter if it were true that he could recall the names of everyone with whom he had ever had any dealings in the course of a season. He assured her that if he could not immediately remember the name he had only to ask for the first letter of the last name to be able to identify the individual and recall his name. He added, "Very early in life I evolved the system whereby I catalogue men's names alphabetically in a file I carry around in the back of my head. I just have to remember or learn which letter to look behind to find the name, etc. It has never failed me."

Mr. Fellow's Christmas card list was an unusual one. It was the circus route book or route for the season. With this route before him he would address hundreds of the Show's greeting cards, each bearing his name, and he never overlooked the name of a single newspaper man in any of the many offices he had visited during the seasons trek across the country.

F. Beverly Kelley is another of the truly outstanding press agents in this country. After graduation from college he found he could not resist the lure of the show world. For a number of years he headed the press, radio and television department of the Ringling-Barnum

Circus. At times he turned out press copy for the Hagenbeck and Wallace Circus. Bev. Kelley has been a frequent contributor to national magazines and written circus books. In recent years he has found an outlet for his considerable talents in the theatrical world and has managed the St. Louis Municipal Opera and traveled ahead of a number of stage shows.



F. Beverly Kelley is the best known circus press agent alive today, and was identified with the big show for many years. He is shown here on a Ringling Barnum lot in 1938. Pfening Collection.



Roland Butler started as a newspaper artist before joining the Sparks Circus in the early 1920s. He headed the press corps on the big show for many years and designed and illustrated many newspaper ads, program covers and lithographs. Pfening Collection.

Another familiar name to hundreds of newspaper offices in this country was that of Roland Butler. Mr. Butler left the *New Bedford* (Mass.) *Standard*

to work in the art and editorial departments of a number of Boston newspapers. The colorful world of sawdust and spangles called to both his artistic sense and his gift for adjectives. The Greatest Show on Earth was portrayed by Mr. Butler's pen in both word and picture, for he was an artist of no small talents. During the winter season he employed these talents in designing and illustrating press books, programs, route books, letter heads, and holiday greeting cards for the Greatest Show on Earth.

Frank Braden, a native of Watseka, Illinois, was educated at the Kentucky Military Institute and the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. He served Uncle Sam for a time in the Philippines, but the world of tanbark and sawdust called to him and he answered, with happy results for both himself and the circus. It was Mr. Braden who conceived and executed the rather daring stunt of planting a circus midget on the lap of J. P. Morgan when the latter was appearing before Congressional committee in Washington, D. C. He was an excellent writer of circus stories.

If ever there was a man who found a deep, abiding happiness in the press department of a circus that man was William B. Antes, a graduate in journalism of the University of Wisconsin. After obtaining a university degree Bill went to work for his father in Evansville, Wisconsin. The elder Antes owned a printing plant and a weekly newspaper there and it was a proud day for him when his son joined in the family enterprises, but the circumscribed life of a small town newspaper man bored Bill from the beginning. He liked band music and sought to at least partially satisfy this love by having installed in his father's home a pipe organ with a multitude of attachments that permitted him to sit of an evening and simulate the music of a band.

Bill married Edna Rosebloom of Monroe, Wisconsin, a quiet girl with a desire to be a homemaker and a help mate unto her husband.

An opportunity presented to buy a local movie house, and Bill grasped this in a half recognized desire to satisfy some vague yearning for the show world. But figures projected on a silver screen fell far short of the thing for which Bill hungered, so he organized a small road show. He booked this into theaters in small towns around the state. The delight he derived from this modest venture convinced Bill that if he were to be happy he must search for greener pastures in showland.

One day he sauntered on to the lot of the Russell Bros. Circus, a large truck show. Fortune smiled on Bill Antes and made possible an introduction to the circus owners, Claude and Pauline Webb. They discovered that they had a

mutual friend in Mrs. Jessie Gollmar, widow of Walter, one of the founders of the Gollmar Bros. Circus that had taken to the road from Baraboo, Wisconsin. Bill discovered that he was talking the same language as were the Webbs. He rejoicingly told Mrs. Gollmar later of his visit with the Webbs. She sensed that Bill Antes longed to escape small town life and try his luck in circusdom and used her influence to procure for him a position with the Russell Bros. Circus organization.

Bill had discovered Shangra La. He entered into the life of the circus as though he had been "born in a red wagon." He also discovered that his experience in his father's newspaper plant stood him in good stead as a press agent with the Russell Bros. Circus. Too, is pleased him that his wife served efficiently in the ticket department. The Webbs counted themselves fortunate to have found a couple as efficient, as enthusiastic, as honest and as loyal as Bill and Edna Antes. The four became steadfast friends. Bill found a helpful friend in Mr. Justus Edwards who gave the recruit press agent many valuable pointers.

Mr. Arthur Concello purchased the Russell Bros. Circus a few years after Bill joined that organization. He, too, recognized Bill's unusual talents and his great enthusiasm for his work and retained his services. One day Mr. Concello confided to Bill that he, Concello, had accepted the position as general manager of the Ringling-Barnum Circus. Art asked Bill if he would be interested in a position in the press department of the Greatest Show on Earth. So surprised and so eager was Bill to accept that his reply was almost incoherent. His wife, Edna, was given a position in the office wagon where she served as efficiently and as faithfully as she had served the Webbs.

Bill was assigned to the radio and television department of the Ringling-Barnum Show. He remained the small town boy bubbling with enthusiasm for the circus world and for his particular niche in it. These qualities opened wide the doors of newspaper, radio and television offices to him. His ingenuity enabled him to plant many an intriguing story concerning performers, workingmen, menagerie animals, — the whole vast world of sawdust and spangles.

To the casual observer Bill Antes gave the impression of being a tireless human dynamo, but those who knew him well watched him with anxiety during those enthusiastic years with the Ringling-Barnum Circus. There came a time when he had to rest on the steps of newspaper offices or on the broad ledge of a window in a radio studio. On the lot he more and more often sought an empty chair that he might relax a few minutes. Friends repeatedly cau-



Bill Antes, press agent first with Russell Bros., later joined the Ringling show.

tioned Bill to slow down. One told him that the circus names would remain on the circus wagons should his life be snuffed out, but his intense loyalty to the circus he had come to love drove him relentlessly. Finally there came a day when will power was not enough. There followed a collapse, then a few weeks of making a game fight for his life at the Mayo Clinic and at his sister's home in Evansville, but it was a losing battle. His devoted wife arranged for his eternal sleep in the little cemetery in his home town.

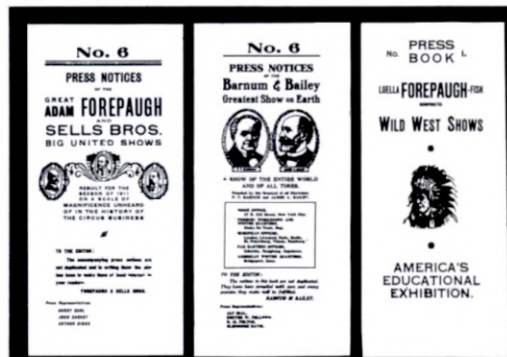
Edna Antes who had never felt the call of the tanbark trail but followed it because of the stars she saw in Bill's eyes as they trod it together. All through his final illness Bill urged Edna not to desert it. She had carved a niche for herself on the Greatest Show on Earth by her efficiency, her honesty, her loyalty, and her sweetly gracious personality. When two of the Ringling-Barnum top executives, Walter Kernan and Frank McCloskey, bought the Clyde Beatty Circus they persuaded Edna to give of her talents to this organization. A nicely furnished house trailer enables Edna to combine the roll she loves best, that of homemaker, with a career in the world Bill loved most. The owners and executives of this largest of the present day tented circuses hold Edna Antes in high esteem and affectionate regard. She is the secretary and treasurer of this outstanding circus and an extremely valuable official of this circus.

With huge sums spent for publicity, a circus wanted to make certain the money had been well invested. To this end it sent out route riders to check the work of bill posters. These sent back detailed reports to the agent in charge of advertising. When the checker-up arrived in a city within a few days of

the coming of the circus he would inspect all the windows in which posters had been hung. These men resembled baseball players in at least one respect. They had to possess splendid legs for they would wear out perhaps a dozen pair of shoes in the course of a season as they walked the miles of city streets to ascertain whether or not the circus posters had been removed from the windows for which passes had been issued. When a checker-up discovered a window from which the paper had been removed he duly noted this on a report sheet. These reports were kept on file at the pass gate at the entrance to the big top on circus day. As lithograph passes were presented, a quick check was made of the report of the checker-up to determine if tickets should be issued in exchange. At times heated arguments resulted when these passes were rejected because the circus paper had not been allowed to remain in the window until the checker-up arrived. There are records in existence which show that each complaint registered with the Ringling Show was carefully investigated. Often there was an exchange of letters concerning the dispute that resulted from the rejection of a lithograph pass. One such exchange of correspondence will serve to illustrate the policy of this circus in every situation involving the public:

A letter addressed to Ringling Bros. under date of September 5, 1914 reads:

"I am enclosing herewith, three of six tickets which your Agent left at our office as compensation for the privilege of displaying signs in the window at 203 South Main St., this city. The other three tickets were left at the gate,



These press books are typical of those used in the 1900-1910 period. The Forepaugh-Sells is 1911, the Barnum & Bailey is 1910 and the Forepaugh Fish Wild West is 1903. They are 3 3/4" x 8 3/4" in size and contain no illustrations. Pfening Collection.

when your agent refused to accept them.

"Your men requested this privilege—we did not seek it. We are not cheap-skates looking for something for nothing. We gave you and your Agent a

square deal, telling him that the building at 203 S. Main St. might be re-modelled prior to your show date in Rockford, and as you will note, such a notation is made on the ticket.

"We refused one-half of the window surface to the local theatres to accommodate you, and when my wife and two friends presented this ticket at the door, they were refused admittance.

"It is not a matter of the amount of money involved — my partner and I purchased six One Dollar Tickets — but it is the principle. You may come to Rockford again. We cannot control all the window frontage in Rockford, but we can remember the cheapness of this transaction. Either you owe us Three Dollars or you cheated us."

The copy of the reply from the Ringlings reads:

"We have your letter of the 5th inst. . . . In your letter you speak of 'cheap-skates,' 'square deal,' the cheapness of this transaction,' either you owe us \$3.00 or you cheated us."

"In as much as this is the first communication we have received from you, and regardless of the justice or injustice of your claim, we believe that the language used is ill advised and ordinarily would not tend to promote an unprejudiced investigation of your complaint. We believe that our institution is well enough known for square dealing and that it's credit, stability and it's reputation for fair dealing are well established. Rest assured that we do not think that this sort of thing can in any manner injure us so far as our standing is concerned. Aside from this if you will be kind enough to advise us — First; where your tickets were presented and refused? Second; Did our advertising inspector call and find that the premises had been wrecked? If you will advise us with reference to the above we will make a complete investigation and make good any omissions on our part and do the right thing. We hope to receive the information because if an error has been made by an employee we want to take steps that will prevent any such occurrence in the future."

The reply to this is as follows:

"I have your letter of the 16th inst. and accept your rebuke for my language in my letter of the 5th inst.

"The fact that your gate-keeper said to my wife in front of the crowd, when she explained that the tickets bore the notation that they would be good if the building should be wrecked. 'How do we know who wrote that on there,' is no reason why my letter should be so strong to the general manager. If it could be called appropriate at all, it should have been said to the man at the gate.

"The heat of indignation is no excuse for my language to you, and I apologize. However, our minds are un-

changed as to the fairness of the transaction.

"In answer to your first question — the tickets were presented at the main gate. We were not advised by your inspector that there was any trouble about the tickets. Evidently he had inspected the premises, and found the front of the building wrecked. This could not have been done until some two weeks later than the posting of the bill.

"Your advertising man solicited the privilege of placing the bills, and we were very fair to him, explaining that the building might be re-modeled prior to show day. He said he would take a chance, and I insisted that he make a notation on the tickets.

"So rests our case."

Ringlings replied:

"Your letter of the 19th inst., to hand, for which we think you. On investigation we find that you were wholly right, and we, therefore, enclose you draft for \$3.00.

"Regretting the incident, we are . . ."

Over the years this unflinching determination to win and keep the good will of the public reaped rich rewards for the Ringling organization and was no small factor in their climb to the pinnacle of the outdoor amusement world.

The last agent to make his appear-


This 1944 Cole Bros. press book is representative of the multi-colored cover press books used in the 1930s and 1940s. Mats were supplied to match the illustrations shown in the book with each story. Pfening Collection.

BOOK NO. 3 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE SEASON 1944

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LY PRODUCE SUPER SPECTACLE
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Taj Mahal*



Autalecks
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The Tumbler of the Tight Wire

To Exhibit In

Note To Editor:

The following material is for immediate use. The
back of the illustration on reverse. A few days prior
to show day, center price representative will call and
ask your permission to give one of the enclosed cards
to the agent of the show who will call the show agent.

PRESS STAFF

C. S. PETERSON * FRANK LEE * JACK GIBBS * EDWARD JONKSTON * BILL O. PARES *

THE NAME CHECKED INDICATES THE PRESS AGENT WHO WILL ARRIVE LATER.

ance in a city before the arrival of the circus was the twenty-four hour man. He was so designated because he traveled that many hours ahead of the circus to make last minute arrangements for its arrival in the city. He would make a check of the crossing where the trains were to unload and to make certain that it had been properly planked and that all obstruction which might interfere with the unloading had been removed. He checked with the feed merchant and the wholesale grocer and other suppliers to make certain that all the items previously ordered were on hand and ready for delivery at the specified time and places. He checked with city officials to make certain that water and police protection would be available the next day. He inspected the streets over which the circus had to haul its equipment and those which the parade was to follow. The twenty-four hour man went out to the lot to determine if there were grass or weeds to be cut or holes filled and to make sure there would be adequate crossings from the street to the lot. Then he would lay out the lot, indicating with little sticks where all the tents were to be erected. This latter task had to be performed with much care, for should he make a mistake it meant the layer-out would have to change the entire layout early the next morning, and that might mean that the air would be blue whereas circuses always wanted clear lays.

His many tasks completed, the twenty-four hour man sent a telegram back to the circus indicating whether the poles of the wagons should be loaded facing the caboose or the locomotive. Likewise the telegram would give the name of hotel twenty-four hour man was stopping in, whether it was a long haul or a short one and a fast or slow lot. A good dinner, perhaps an hour with newspaper or chatting with hotel guests, the twenty-four hour man would seek his bed for he had to be on hand before dawn the next morning to meet the "flying squadron," as the first section of the train was known.

Long before other hotel guests were astir, this circus agent would answer the call he had the previous night requested of the desk clerk. A roll or a doughnut with a cup of coffee, and he was on his way to the railway yards, there to greet the first of the show trains to arrive. Climbing aboard almost before the train crew brought the train to a stop he would pass quickly through the sleeping cars awakening the workingmen. Then he would hurry to the unloading crossing where the wagons were to be unloaded from the flat cars. No sooner was the first wagon down the runs that the twenty-four hour man climbed to a seat beside the driver to direct him and to blaze the trail to the lot. When this first wagon

came to an intersection where a left turn was to be made, the agent climbed down and placed a lighted kerosene torch near the left curb. Remounting the wagon he rode until another turn must be indicated. Should this be a righthand one his torch was set on the near right curb. Every teamster following turned right or left, as the torches beckoned. These kerosene beacons burned throughout the day and guided the drivers and horses back to the loading runs at night and into the wee small hours of the next day. Circus tradition has it that should a teamster fall asleep, as well he might if his hours of rest had been fewer even than usual, the faithful and knowing horses would deliver him and his wagons safely to the lot or runs, as the case might be.



Willie Carr was a well known 24 hour man. Photo from 1943 RB Program.

Arriving at the lot the twenty-four hour man would assist the layer-out in locating all the tents, stake lines, the midway, sideshow, concessions and ticket wagons, and the front entrance as well as the back entrance.

Of primary importance was the location of this front entrance. The convenience of the patrons was given first consideration, but weather conditions likewise played a role in its selection. The agent and layer-out had to be sure the circus could get off the lot after the night performance regardless of the worst the elements could deal. These men had to so spot the tents as to provide alleys to accomodate the circus wagons as they unloaded and later reloaded their corgoes. Small iron rods with red, blue yellow, white or other ribbons attached would be inserted in the ground to indicate to the teamsters and to the workmen where each of the many tents was to be located. In the

same manner stake lines and center poles were spotted.

The twenty-four hour man had to find time to discuss with the parade marshall the route to be followed. The lot properly platted for its tented-city-of-a-day, and the parade marshall satisfied as to his instructions, the agent caught the next train to a city farther along the route the circus was to follow to there again play his varied role as one of the little known but indispensable executives which made circus day the great holiday it was for so long a period in the history of America.

One of the better known of the twenty-four hour men was William Carr, affectionately known by his co-workers as "Wee Willie." Partly because of his long terture with the Ringling-Barnum combine and the Ringling show and partly because of his winning personality, Willie Carr's name became as well known it seemed as were those names that were emblazoned on hundreds of red wagons and some railway cars. Big top boss canvasmen and layers out always rejoiced when they learned that Wee Willie had the previous day staked out the lot, for it was seldom indeed that they found it necessary to make any alterations in Carr's stake line flag sticks. At times in the course of a season a contracting agent would have no alternative but to rent a lot that would be too tight or small or easy platting. Carr would stand for a few minutes carefully studying the contours and borders of one of these "tight" lots and then, without benefit of tape line, he would again begin to spot his flag-sticks. Working quietly and efficiently he would thus indicate the location of every one of some forty tents from the "donikers" to the mammoth big top. He was quite justified if, after completing the laying out of such a lot, he stood for a few minutes and proudly scanned the maze of circus sticks he had just placed, for his eye could visualize every alley along which the horses were to draw heavily loaded wagons on the morrow, could see in his mind's eye the tents that would form the city-for-a-day. The guy line stakes for the various tents might actually overlap here and there but never where to do so would jeopardize safe passage for wagons or truck, though men and women might have to pick their way with care as they went to and fro during the day.

Dining one day with Willie Carr in the Auditorium hotel in Cleveland, Ohio, that was within easy walking to the lot, we led him to talk of some of his experiences with the circus. One of his recollections on this occasion seems worthy of recording here. "There is one incident I shall never forget," he mused. "It was back about 1910 in a town in Ohio. I was busy making the last minute arrangements for the circus to

come in the next day. In those days the show could still give its truly splendid street parade, for cities were not then cluttered with these horeless carriages that now spend a lot of gas every day looking for a place to park,—you know, start for the office on Friday and end up a Sunday driver. Well the mayor of this town hunted me up and told me he had a special request to make and did hope I could find some way to grant it. He went on to tell me than one of the towns youngsters, a bright, lovable lad, had been run over a week or so earlier, and the doctors feared he did not have many days to live. 'That tike,' said the mayor, 'has counted not the days but the hours your circus should get here. His father had promised to take him to the show. Now he begs to be at least allowed to see the parade. Do you suppose, Mr. Carr, you could persuade your circus to route at least a part of their parade past the boy's home?' Well sir, I knew that was a pretty big order but I took the address of the boy's home and promised the mayor I'd see what could be done. So I fixed it up the next morning with the parade marshall and I'm proud to tell you that the entire parade, close to a mile or more in length, detoured past the youngster's home. His folks wheeled him to the front porch, and afterwards his father told me as he wished I might have seen his son's face that hour. 'Why Mr. Carr,' he said, 'my boy seemed actually to forget the terrible pain he had suffered all those days after his accident. He thought each team of horses more beautiful that the ones that had already passed. Every band gave him such delight that he was clapping his hands and shouting to the musicians. And when some of the circus folks in that parade waved to my boy, the look he gave us made it almost impossible for us to keep from crying. We can never thank you enough, Mr. Carr, — you and those wonderful Ringlings.'

"And you know," added Carr; "everyone in that parade had heard about that lad, knew that he would be watching from the porch of his home and they went out of their way to wave to him, call to him, play a band piece they thought he'd especially like. Circus folks are like that, you know."

Suddenly Mr. Carr looked at us and commented, "you're from Madison, Wisconsin, aren't you?" we were proud to admit it but wondered why he asked. "Well you must have read that fine editorial by Amon Wilder some years ago, haven't you?" Again were proud to say "yes," for that editorial deserved to be preserved in some anthology of beautiful thoughts beautifully expressed. It read:

HE GAVE HER A LILY

"Ringlings is in town, and this morning the parade swept the Capitol Park.

"A small barefoot boy stood by the gate at the market place. His hands were full of water lilies. The lad no doubt was up early this morning to gather them. To sell them he walked into the big city before you sat down to your 'grape nuts.'

"But as the magnificence of the parade grew upon him, he forgot all else. The trumpeters came first. The season is early and the costumes were fresh; the colors undimmed. The paint of the great wagons glistened in the sunshine as the great emerald flashed in Nero's fat hand when his cruel eyes circled the amphitheater.

"The boy forgot his home, his lilies; he was in wonderland. Then came a huge lumbering, glorious chariot, from the top of which the musicians poured out strains of triumph and marvel that made the air heavy and rich with sweetness. Twenty-four great Norman horses — six parallel of four each — dragged this splendor.

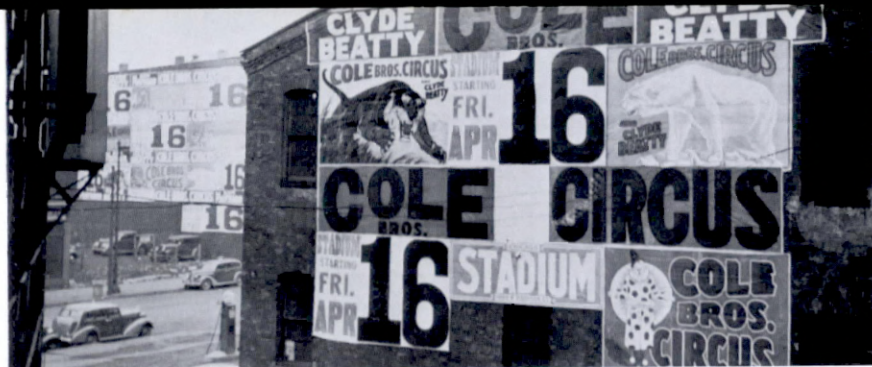
"Jim Hill's Northwest had been searched to make up this show of horse-flesh; and as the heavy metal trappings flopped on their stolid giant forms, the barefoot boy thought of stories of Arabit and the field of honor where shield and spear gave brave knights something to do worth while.

"It was then the boy, whose life had been a dreary round of potato field and pasture lots and dreams — after chores were done — fairly looked into heaven. The pattering hoofs of six fine-lined aristocrat horses hastened toward him. In the next car one of the six male lions, with whom a keeper was caged, gave a low, sullen growl as he sneaked into his corner under a threat; but the boy hear it not . . .

"Further down the parade the steam organ was pouring out 'Home Sweet Home' in real harmonies (no mere steam calliope); but all this was sealed to the boy. The big black horses bore six beautiful women, at least they seemed beautiful to him. Their long, vari-colored robes hung nearly to the ground and in their hats and poise and long gloves were touches of life when knighthood was in flower; and the delicate blacks lifted their hoofs in dainty fashion and tossed flecks of foam from their sensitive mouths, and their thin nostrils showed red in impatience and half-formed fear.

"It was a graceful scene even to the old folks who looked on and could see beneath the tinsel and paint the weariness and the grind of the daily round. The sextette were now hard on the lad. He could see the perspiration on the glistening necks of the horses and hear the bussett leather harness creak. An oh! Paradise! he could look up into the faces of the fairy creatures, who ruled their impatient steeds so carelessly.

"An inspiration struck the lad. Hold-



These two large banner stands announced the 1937 Chicago engagement of the Cole Bros. Circus. Pfening Collection.

ing out his dripping lilies, he ran eagerly along the side of the cavalcade. Some of the women threw a glance at the boy, but that was all.

"Its a dreary round, the circus business, and it's Madison today and Janesville tomorrow. The boy was about to give up his dream, when one of the women saw him and smiled. Perhaps she had somewhere a nine-year old boy herself, or perhaps on some Nebraska farm, where she was early clever with horses and thus fixed her destiny — perhaps under a mound lies a brother who died long before she joined Ringlings, and who, had he lived, well, the threads of human life are strangely twisted.

"The woman seemed scarcely to draw the rains, but the princely black horse was thrown back on his haunches, and she learned, the picture of grace, to take a lily, she smiled again, and said, 'Thank you, my boy,' and a strange

thrill went through us who looked on, as when a mob falls back to let a baby's funeral pass, or some other firm note of sweet human nature is struck to remind a despondent world how near to grandeur is our dust.

Somewhere on the lake shore of Dane County tonight is a boy to whom a hay-field will never again seem quite the same. A lady from the marvel world smiled on him and took his modest gift, and her gentle voice thanked him.

"And somewhere in the confusion of wagon wheels and ghostly mountains of canvas and gilt and gold that looks best at a distance — somewhere in that gay scene of Jerusalem and the Crusades is a woman whose heart quickened today because a barefoot boy was proud to toss a water lily, and because its fragrance wafted into her dusty, tired life memories of some spot where she dreamed and perhaps loved, and where there was no tread of elephants nor noisy blare of bands, but only green trees and a brook, and the sweet mystery of the wind through the trees." (Amos P. Wilder was editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal*, Madison from 1894 to 1906)

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Grady R. Weddle 1407 South Mountain View Pomona, California 91766	1917	Kenneth E. Karalfa 433 Oak Street Johnstown, Pennsylvania 15902	1925
James M. Brown 301 South Collins Street Sioux City, Iowa 51103	1918	Robert W. Walsh 3317 North Tillotson Muncie, Indiana 47304	1926
Roger E. Allen Hawthorne Road Sturbridge, Massachusetts 01566	1919	William G. Watt, Jr. 6524 North 27th Street Arlington, Virginia 22213	1927
Elaine Yanow 357 Hidden River Road Narberth, Pennsylvania 19072	1920	John E. Bock RFD 4, Loehr Road Rockville, Connecticut 06066	1928
Lawrence C. White Idaho Veteran's Home Boise, Idaho 83707	1921	William O. McElfish 1700 Sommons Court Baltimore, Maryland 21237	1929
Donald K. Covington III VAW 115 FPO San Francisco, California 96601	1922	Harvey M. Esto 380 Avalon Drive Mansfield, Ohio 44906	1930
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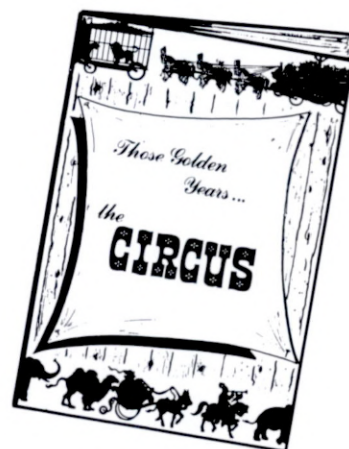
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KRONE

THE GREATEST CIRCUS

IN THE WORLD

By Franklin O. Felt

Since John Ringling North closed the under canvas production of "The Greatest Show on Earth" there has been no clear cut champion for the honor of being the world's largest or greatest tented circus. In the United States the Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers Circus advertises itself as the "World's Largest Circus". Since 1964 the rolling stock of England's Billy Smart's Circus has been proudly emblazoned with the "World's Largest" subtitle. In Germany the huge Circus Krone's subtitle is closer to Ringling's as it advertises itself as "Der groesste Circus der Welt" (The Greatest Circus in the world).

The writer had the opportunity during the summer of 1969 to visit several times the under canvas edition of the Circus Krone and to serve as announcer for the annual American Day at the Circus Krone on February 23, 1970 at the famous Krone circus building in Munich. This provided an opportunity to gather enough data to provide American fans with a detailed behind the scenes review of this great show. It will also give readers an opportunity to compare this giant tented organization with other major shows indetermining what show is today the largest under canvas circus in the world.

History

Few Americans will be familiar with the story of the Circus Krone so a few words about the history of Germany's and perhaps the world's number one big top are appropriate. The Circus Krone is not old by the standards of many famous European circuses, some of which are family owned enterprises dating back several generations. The Circus Krone was founded by Carl Krone in 1901 under the name Circus Charles. Karl Krone came from a family of showmen and had inherited his father's traveling menagerie which he had promptly changed into a circus. By World War I it had grown into a fairly large show and in 1919 established its winter quarters and world famous permanent circus arena in Munich. While on a 1924 tour in Italy Mr. Krone re-titled the Circus Charles to the present Circus Krone.

The circus grew rapidly and by 1928 was the European equivalent of Ringling-Barnum with a large American style big top seating almost 12,000 and containing three rings and two stages. The show employed over 1,000 persons and carried hundreds of animals. In 1937 Carl Krone, sensing the European

public's preference for the single ring performance, returned to the traditional European one ring tent. Then, with his show at its peak, a series of disasters struck which almost ended this great show. World War II hurt the traveling circus as the Nazi regime mobilized all resources and manpower for their fruitless struggle. The circus managed to carry on despite the wartime restrictions but in 1943 its founder, Carl Krone, died while on tour in Austria. His wife Ida, daughter Frieda, and son-in-law Carl Sembach tried to carry on. In December of 1944, however, during allied bombing raids on Munich the circus and its quarters were almost totally destroyed.



The highly carved bandwagon of the Krone show is pictured in Berlin, Germany, in the 1920s. Pfening Collection.

The year 1945 dawned with the Circus Krone apparently at the end of the road with its founder and director dead, the physical properties and many animals destroyed, its personnel dispersed, and the German economy upon which it depended in a shambles. It was then that the Sembach's called upon that determination and ingenuity which marks the exceptionally successful showman. By Christmas day of the same year a new circus building was completed at the same Munich site. The first full post-war performance was presented in the Ice Stadium at the Bavarian resort city of Garmisch-Partenkirchen under sponsorship of the

U. S. Army's Special Services at a birthday party celebration for the famed American tank commander General George S. Patton. It was not until 1949, however, that the complete under canvas version of the Circus Krone opened its first post-war performance. The show had been completely rebuilt in less than four years despite the privations and shortages resulting from the collapse of the "Third Reich".

Today the Circus Krone remains the leading circus on the European continent and every second or third year virtually every city of over 50,000 population as well as numerous smaller communities smaller communities in Austria and West Germany can look for-

ward to a visit from the big show. Its continued success may be accounted for by the personal interest of the Sembachs in the detailed management of their enterprise. Early in the morning at the runs, at the main entrance prior to the performance, and late at night as the big top billows to the ground the tall figure of Carl Sembach can be seen closely watching every detail. Mrs. Frieda Sembach-Krone is often at her husband's side as well as regularly handling the twelve performing elephants during the performance. The success of the Circus Krone again illustrates the advantage of careful on the scene management over the absentee ownership which has hurt numerous major shows in the past.

Railroad Trains

In 1969 the Circus Krone opened its



Photo 1 — Unloading of first section gas cut begins. Note train crew letting down sides of flat car to form a runway to the unloading platform. All photos by the author.

tenting season in Stuttgart, West Germany and concentrated its tour in Austria and southern Germany, including a four week stand in beautiful Vienna. The circus traveled on three trains consisting of 109 forty-five foot railway cars. The flat cars look somewhat like the sixty foot flats with which most American railway shows were equipped until the late 1920's.

Only one passenger car is carried on each of the three Krone trains and this is only for the train crew. Railway passenger cars are not necessary because most of the show's personnel remain in the many living van wagons which are carried on the flat cars. The executive staff and most of the performers have their own private wagons while the rest of the personnel reside in living vans equipped with four to eight bunks. In addition, some performers travel in private automobiles and trucks with their own house trailers.

The show train itself is not as attractive as the gaily painted American show trains used to be. The rolling stock is leased from the state owned railroad and is painted a dull brown color similar to that used on U. S. railway freight cars. Only one car on the train is painted circus colors and carries the show's title. It is an elephant stock car done in bright yellow with red and

blue lettering and trim. The trains, however, look very colorful pulling into a station in the early morning loaded with long strings of white wagons with bright red lettering and blue trim. In one small Austrian city the writer observed the third section arriving in the rail yards pulled by a steam engine — a real touch of nostalgia. With three trains arriving in the rail yards at one hour intervals and hundreds of wagons being shuttled from the runs to the lot by huge diesel trucks and tractors an American is reminded of those by-gone days when the Ringling-Barnum tented aggregation arrived in town.

The German railroad circus has a different train unloading procedure from that of American shows. Instead of unloading off the end of a string of flats by means of show owned runs, a short string of about eight flat cars is pulled alongside a permanent unload-

Photo 2 — Big top canvas wagons 57 and 58 being unloaded from flat cars. Note how sides of flat cars form ramp to the loading platform.



ing platform and ramp and the wagons unloaded off the side of the flat car adjacent to the platform and then hauled away down the damp. The sides of the flats fold down in order to bridge the gap between the flat car and the platform, see photo. This limits the unloading operation to the main railway yards in most towns.

The loading order of the three Circus Krone trains is as follows (flat cars are not numbered but have been assigned an arbitrary sequence number for clarity in listing):

Train No. 1

Flat	Wagon No.	Load
1	74	Horse props & stable equipment
	230	Puller truck
2	240	Fire truck
	240	Tractor
3	200	Tank truck
	193	Tractor
4	196	Tractor
	192	Tractor
	193	Tractor
5	130	3 seals; pelican
	126	Aviary (birds)
6	71	Canvas repair
	49	Harness shop
7	18	Elephant and lead stock tent canvas
	153	Chimpanzees
8	215	Horse props
	129	Living van
9	—	Menagerie stalls
	221	House trailer
10	182	Elephant props
	72	Floor for elephant tent
11	148	Hyena and puma
	122	Hyena; 2 black bears
12	173	2 tigers
	157	3 tigers
13	163	2 tigers
	119	3 tigers
14	146	Polar bear
	164	2 timber wolves
15	39	Fencing
16	170	Giraffe
17	103	Living van
	107	Worker's living van
18	159	Lion; lioness
	165	Cheeta; leopard
19	101	Living van — workmen
	40	Living van
20	102	Living van
	41	Living van
21	150	Rhesus monkeys; 3 ant eaters
	120	Porcupines and misc. small animals
22	151	Hippo
	171	Small lead stock
23	216	Menagerie side poles
	232	Small tank wagon
24	97	Horse tent poles and stables
	67	Horse tent poles and stables
25	203	Living van
	219	Private act truck
26	220	House trailer
	8	Living van
27	—	2 shutles for unloading lead stock cars
	17	Living van

Train No. 2

1	186	Puller truck
	187	Tractor with crane
2	57	Big top canvas
	58	Big top canvas
3	190	Tractor
	191	Tractor
	195	Tractor
4	83	Light dept. props
	51	Light dept.
5	121	Light dept. switch wagon
	141	Generators
6	185	Cook house

7	178	Supplies and living van
	70	Workmen's living van
8	181	Stake and chain
	98	Big top side poles
9	178	Shop parts and living van
	86	Mechanical shop
10	137	Restaurant tent and supplies
	128	Living van
11	251	Generators
	1332	Light dept. gas tank
	46	Light bulbs
12	252	Generator
	139	Transformer wagon
13	116	Quarter poles and light towers
14	92	Props for stage
15	32	Property tent and canvas
	234	Living van
16	99	Living van, workmen
	104	Living van, workmen
17	156	Front door and lights
	87	Living van
18	5	Sembach's living van
	2	Sembach's living van
19	23	Night watchman quarters
	1	Christel Sembach's living van
20	4	Animal supplies and living van
	108	Living van
21	7	Living van
	24	Bathing/shower wagon
22	160	Cage with pig
	152	Aviary with condor and ostrich
23	94	Living van, prop crew
	188	Living van, workmen
24	144	Living van
	154	Living van, workmen
25	22	Living van, workmen
	56	Living van, workmen
26	53	Living van, workmen
	180	Living van, workmen
27	54	Living van, prop crew
	109	Living van, workmen
28	25	Living van, boss canvas man
29	105	Living van
	106	Living van, workmen
30	47	Harness and living van
	59	Living van, workmen
31	64	Main entrance
32	113	Fencing
	93	Living van
33	63	Main entrance
34	77	Living van, electricians
	48	Living van, electricians
35	205	Living van
	42	Living van
Train No. 3		
1	28	Props
	61	Props
2	73	Props
	96	Living van, prop crew
3	76	Chairs
	31	Stage props
4	43	Seats
	44	Seats
5	10	Refrig. meat for cats
	65	Trash wagon
6	29	Seats
	36	Seats
7	136	Stringers
8	44	Seats
	37	Seats
9	214	Wardrobe and living van
	66	Wardrobe
10	138	Stringers
11	91	Stage folds on wagon
	—	Chariot
12	45	Wardrobe and tailor shop
	21	Wardrobe
13	111	Heating equipment
	27	Stairs to seats
14	—	Cat act runs and props
	115	Menagerie fencing
15	78	Ticket office
16	112	Restaurant wagon
	62	Menagerie ticket office
17	133	Living van
	8	Living van
18	38	Men's rest rooms
	55	Ladies rest rooms
19	81	Props



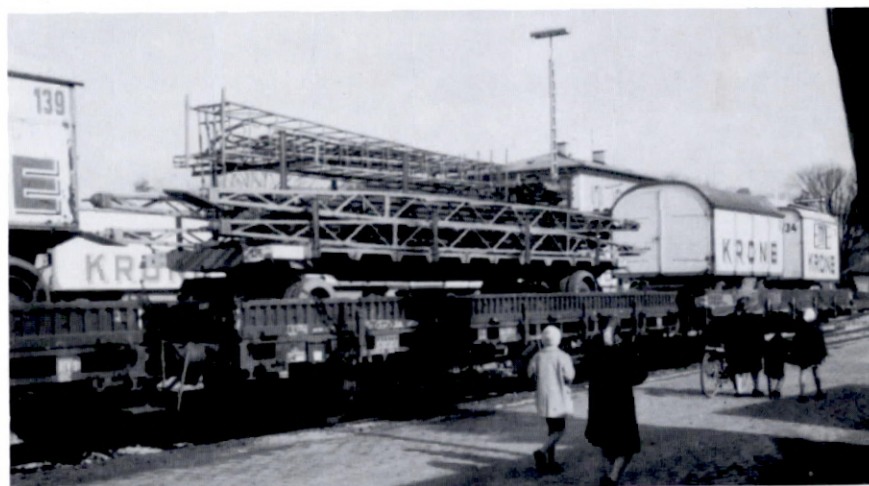
Photo 3 — The only decorated car on the Krone train, an elephant car.

30	Living van, band
147	Wardrobe
210	Band props and instruments
135	Band stand and menagerie front
52	Props
34	Props
85	Box seat stalls and carpeting
233	Cook house water wagon
209	Living van
208	Living van
80	Main office
79	Personnel office
11	Living van
166	Stables for horse tent
19	Living van
68	Press office
6	Living van
82	Blacksmith
155	Paint and tool wagon
100	Circus school
14	Living van

Train	Flats	Stock	Pas-senger	Total
1	27	14	1	42
2	35	—	1	36
3	30	—	1	31
Total	92	14	3	109

Two semi trailer trucks travel overland. Number 236 carries the four 78

Photo 4 — Second section with wagons 116 — quarter poles and light towers; 32 — property tent and canvas; 134 — living van.



foot center poles, mud sills, tackle, rigging and stakes for the big top. This unit moves a few days in advance of the show to erect the center poles and pound all the stakes. It then doubles back to pick up the second set of poles and stakes from the previous stand. American fans may recall this system of utilizing two sets of center poles was used by Cristiani Bros. in 1958 and 1959. Semi number 235 is used to gilly the lead stock from the train to the lot. When traveling overland it carries the canvas for the horse tents.

Menagerie

The Circus Krone carries the largest menagerie this writer has seen since viewing the 1956 Ringling-Barnum traveling zoo. It is arranged in typical European style with all caged animals displayed in the open and the lead stock in four long narrow tents. The 100 foot long elephant tent contains nine large bulls and four punks. All the bulls stand on heavy wooden flooring rather than directly on the ground. A second 148 foot by 30 foot tent houses the exotic lead stock consisting of 6 large and 2 baby camels, 2 lamas, 1 watusi, 2 zebra, five Jerusalem buros, 1 holstein cow, 2 brahma bulls, 1 yak, 2 alpacas, 9 angora sheep 25 small black goats, 7 horses and 26 ponies. Sixty



Photo 5 — Semi No. 235 — Stable canvas and used as gilly truck for hauling lead stock from train.

more horses are housed in a very long narrow top, about 295 feet in length and 25 feet in width. Each horse has an individual stall with its name hung on a metal plate over the entrance to the stall. The long top can rarely be set up as a single unit and is constructed so it can be used as either an "L" shaped top or most often as two separate tents.

The remainder of the animals are displayed out of doors with the giraffe in an open pen and the others in 18 cages as follows: cage number 119 (3 tigers), 120 (2 porcupines plus guinea pigs and other small animals), 122 (2 black bears and a hyena), 126 (miscellaneous birds), 130 (4 seals and a pelican), 146 (polar bear), 148 (hyena and 2 pumas), 150 (20 rhesus monkeys and 3 ant eaters), 151 (hippopotamus), 152 (ostrich, kondor, miscellaneous birds), 153 (chimpanzee and orangutang), 157 (3 tigers), 159 (lion and lioness), 160 (large pig), 163 (2 tigers), 164 (2 timber wolves), 165 (2 leopards), and 173 (2 tigers).

The menagerie with its separate tents and cages can be arranged in numerous layouts to fit dimensions of the lots available. The only inflexible requirement is to position the cages containing the performing tigers along the big top near the back door so that the cats can be sent through the chutes into the arena. Since the entire lot can be surrounded by a five foot high fence which is carried by the show, the open air menagerie can be effectively denied to non-paying visitors.

Front Yard

The Circus Krone, in typical European style, has no side show or line of concession stands. A typical front yard layout at the show has located on the left of the main entrance a panel front for the menagerie and beside this the menagerie ticket wagon. On the right of the entrance is a restaurant tent, a flashy blue plastic top housing tables and chairs and in which white coated

waiters are employed. A modern serving wagon occupies one side of this top. A small grab stand wagon also serves the midway crowds.

Fronting the big top is a giant marquee that folds up on two thirty-five foot wagons by means of a special hydraulic system. This marquee is one of the largest and most colorful the writer has ever seen. It is over forty feet in height and approximately one hundred feet in length. Its size plus the multi-colored panels provides the visitor a truly imposing welcome. On each side of the great marquee are the main ticket wagon and three office wagons (general office, press and personnel). The Circus Krone thus presents a truly impressive first view to the visitor despite the absence of an American side show banner line.

The Big Top

The main tent of the Circus Krone is an oval spread in royal blue measuring 255 feet by 176 feet. The top uses four aluminum center poles arranged in the usual square fashion of European big tops. The tent, however, is made slightly elongated by the addition of four 62 foot steel girder type poles two each at both long ends of the top, while a full row of forty-eight 45 foot quarter poles are spaced around the entire tent. At one of the long ends of the top is the bandstand and customers entrance, with customers entering beneath the raised band platform. At the opposite end is a large stage flanked by the performers entrance and exit.

The tent seats approximately 5,000 persons. Seating is different from that found on American tented circuses. It is much heavier and generally more comfortable. Krone uses 19 high benches plus three rows of chairs around the whole top. Box seats consisting of two to three rows of four chairs per box are located adjacent to the ring. There is, therefore, no hippodrome track but only a wide walkway for patrons separating the box seats and first row of chairs. The seats may also be reached from behind by means of four wide

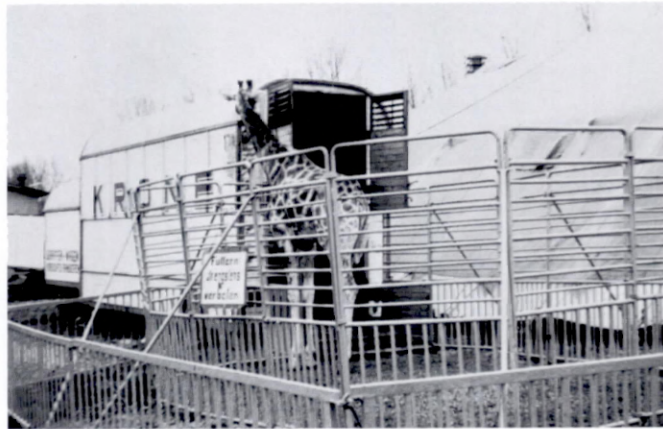


Photo 6 — Giraffe in open air menagerie.

stairways spaced at equal intervals around the outside of the big top.

Cookhouse

Since in the European circus all the performers, executive staff and department bosses have their own private living vans, the cookhouse is generally limited to serving the working crew. Krone carries a 35 foot kitchen van which is spotlessly clean and outfitted with the latest stainless steel equipment. The two chefs always appear in clean white aprons and shirts with tall white chef's hats. When traveling, the food is prepared on the train before arrival in a city. The train crew is then served at the runs and the wagon later moved to the lot for serving the remainder of the show's working men. No dining tent is carried as the help eats in empty baggage wagons in which tables are erected.

Performance

The 1969 summer performance of the Circus Krone was an excellent well balanced program. The Sembachs are superb horse trainers and their show consistently emphasizes large numbers of well trained equine displays presented by the family. The single ring performance ran very smoothly with aerial acts and clown numbers filling in outside the ring while major prop changes were made. The show presented some major pageantry with a Ringling Brothers flavor. On the giant stage 14 gorgeously costumed ballet girls introduced several of the featured acts with the girls costumed and performing dances in themes appropriate to each



act. The performers entered through a doorway at the back of the stage and were escorted by the ballet girls down a silver staircase to the ring.

Display No. 1 — Concert by Otto Kolmsee and his excellent 12 piece circus orchestra.

Display No. 2 — Welcome to the 1969 edition of the Circus Krone by three gorgeously gowned young ladies, one giving the introduction in German, one in English and the last in French.

Display No. 3 — "Hunting Ride in the Arena" presents four tandem teams of horses driven by men in hunting costumes.

Display No. 4 — The Four Rosarios: ladder balancing and juggling by two men and two women in American indian costumes. The climax of this act was a three high stand on an unsupported ladder.

Display No. 5 — Jacmo Enders, of the versatile Enders Brothers, in a comedy plate spinning routine.

Display No. 6 — Frieda Sembach-Krone presenting the Krone performing elephants. The director of the Circus Krone showed twelve of the show's thirteen bulls all in the ring at the same time for the act's climax.

Display No. 7 — The Tongas: a man and woman performing from a fixed rigging in the dome of the big top.

Display No. 8 — Traditional European musical clowns, Bento, Babusio and Company.

Display No. 9 — "Parade of Beauty", the 14 Krone ballet girls in a colorful dance display on the great stage. This number introduces display number 10.

Display No. 10 — Christel Sembach-Krone presenting the Krone liberty horses. The display opens with eight free running white horses appearing first through a mist created by a special fog making device with a background of blue lights, a truly impressive scene. Miss Sembach-Krone then puts the horses through a well drilled routine and follows with another group of six blacks and a small pony.

Intermission

Display No. 11 — Concert by the Circus Krone orchestra.

Display No. 12 — Walter Milde presents the Circus Krone's seven performing tigers.

Display No. 13 — Clowns in a filler number.

Display No. 14 — The Enders Brothers bare-back riding act. Rudi Enders is featured in a horse backward somersault.

Display No. 15 — Oriental Ballet with the ballet girls and a man and woman as featured solo dancers introduces display number 16.

Photo 10 — Cook house wagon. Note chefs preparing morning meal before the wagon is unloaded from the train.



Photo 11 — Front gate, ticket and office wagons and big top of the Circus Krone.

Display No. 16 — The Tacheng Dsai Troupe of Chinese acrobats, three men and a girl, in a fast moving acrobat act climaxed with the girl doing a hair swing.

Display No. 17 — Spanish high school horses ridden by Christel Sembach-Krone. In the course of this act she rides four different horses. This feature is introduced by the ballet girls in a castanet Spanish ballet scene.

Display No. 18 — Clowns in a filler act while aerial rigging is erected.

Display No. 20 — Les Zenganno flying return act. Three young flyers from France (two men and a woman). A new feature was the darkening of the top with the flyers moving through the air in uminocs costumes.

Display No. 21 — The Three Morenos, Spanish musical clowns.

Display No. 21 — The Three Morenos, Spanish musical clowns.

Display No. 22 — The Ben Mohammed Troupe of fast moving Arabian tumblers who climax their act with the entire group forming a human pyramid of all nine held aloft by the tenth member of the company.

Display No. 23 — The Grand Finale in which all 45 performers, escorted by the ballet girls, appeared to receive the applause of the audience.

Billing and Publicity

The Circus Krone utilizes extensive outdoor advertising in each community in which it exhibits. In addition to the one by three lithos placed in many store windows a variety of larger lithos is available. The large permanent billboards found along most highways in

the United States are illegal in Germany and there are severe limits for bill posting on private premises. The circus, therefore, constructs its own large wooden billboards in each new city and tears them down at the end of the stand. This is reminiscent of American shows at the turn of the century. Several sets of these advertising billboards are carried so that the advance unit can work two or three weeks ahead of the circus. The advance is motorized and travels on No. 40, a large straight van type truck, a straight open van truck which pulls a large open trailer (these open units carry the portable billboards), and three or four Volkswagen microbuses.

Extensive use of newspaper publicity is also used to herald the arrival of the show. Feature stories and pictures as well as advertising cuts appear daily up to two weeks prior to the opening day and during the course of the stand. They are very similar in format to the newspaper advertising used by American shows.

Winter Quarters

Probably no circus in the world has a finer winter home than does the Circus Krone. The heart of its quarters is the world's finest permanent indoor arena built specifically for presentation

Photo 12 — The world's newest and finest circus arena in Munich, West Germany.





of the circus. This arena, erected to replace the first post-World War II building, was completed in 1962 at the Munich site originally acquired by Carl Krone in 1919. It is now in the center of Munich only a few blocks from the main railway station. It is some of the most valuable property in the city.

The site covers almost four U. S. city blocks with the arena in the middle facing the main street and flanked by two multi-story circus office and apartment buildings. On the sides and back of the arena are the barns housing the horses, elephants and other lead stock. These buildings also contain a training arena for cat acts and storage space for props. Located across the street from this main complex are the paint shop, carpenter shop, mechanical shop and wagon sheds. Additional rolling stock is stored at a large wagon park located just outside of the city.

The permanent circus building allows the Circus Krone to carry on a ten month operation. Following the April to November tenting season the show returns to its Munich base to prepare for its winter show which traditionally opens each Christmas day for a three

month run at the circus arena. A completely different program is presented each month during January, February and March. During the months the circus is on its tenting tour the arena is rented for other types of performances ranging from ballet to rock and roll groups.

For the past seven years on George Washington's Birthday, an American Day at the Circus Krone has been sponsored by the American Shrine Club in Munich. The Shriners buy the matinee performance and sell tickets to the large American military and business community in the Munich area for a real "Shrine Circus". The acts are introduced by an english speaking ringmaster. The author realized a lifetime ambition by serving in this capacity for the 1970 performance. A full house is the rule at this "American Day" performance and the Shrine realizes a handsome profit for its charities.

The American circus fan who travels through Europe without including a visit to the Circus Krone on his itinerary will be missing a rare opportunity to relive those bygone days of the

giant American railway circus. Memories of Ringling-Barnum's big top days will come flooding back if one manages to catch a closing performance at a particular stand. As one approaches the lot they will see the heavy diesel trucks already pulling some of the shop wagons to the runs. During the show the roar of tractors moving the menagerie off the lot will serve as background to the music of the circus band. After the show one should remain and partake of those wonderful sights and sounds — the line of elephants leaving the lot, strings of wagons moving off, the shouted commands, flickering lights, the hustle and bustle of the "Big One" on the move. These thrills in addition to a spectacular circus performance await you at the Circus Krone.

Although it is a large organization, American circus fans who properly identify themselves will find as warm a welcome at Germany's "Big One" as on the lot of a little family show. The personnel are friendly and helpful and many speak English, so those whose knowledge of German is limited will find no difficulty. A visit will be treat long remembered.

Just published!

An exciting and lavishly illustrated book
on the colorful craftsmen who transformed
blocks of wood into cigar-store Indians,
show figures, circus wagons and
other masterpieces of Americana

Artists in Wood

by Frederick Fried

\$15, now at your bookstore, or direct from

Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. Publisher

419 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016



ARTISTS IN WOOD by Frederick Fried, published by Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., New York, 1970. Price \$15.00.

For the circus historian this book is the first attempt to identify a few of the better artists that carved the ornamentation for our parade wagons. For a wider segment of the artistically inclined, it is an outstanding milestone in research on the subject of American Folk Art.

Generally speaking, the breed of "artists in wood" who were responsible for much of what is now termed folk art did not consider themselves to be in a class with Praxiteles, Michelangelo, or the Berninis but rather to be a part of the commercial advertising business. Advertising budgets footed their bills whether they were turning out Wooden Indians for cigar stores or ornamentation for circus wagons. Nowadays, with only a few inclined to waste a second glance on commercial displays, their role has necessarily given way to less enduring forms of advertising.

Mr. Fried opens with a chapter on the ship building industry as it existed in the late 18th Century in which the professional carvers found a considerable market for their talents furnishing the carved figureheads and sterns. Following the Civil War, the wooden shipbuilding industry went kaput but the accelerated demand for tobacconists figures (Wooden Indians and the like) took up much of the slack. Otherwise there was but little need for their wares other than commissions to decorate public buildings, churches, store fronts, and the homes of those what could afford it. The major portion of the text (300 9x12 pages) and the illustrations (265) concern these subjects.

The book's value to circus historians centers around three New York carvers who were successively linked together in a mentor-apprentice relationship. The first of these was John L. Cromwell, a carver for John Stephenson who built the early bandchariots for the 1840 vintage Flatfoot shows. The next was Thomas V. Brooks who did much of the pre-1880 ornamentation for Fielding Brothers. The last was Samuel A. Robb who overlapped for a period and succeeded Brooks as Fielding's carver until Fielding went out of business in

1886. By that time Sebastian was well established in the circus business and Robb continued to carve for them. His most notable contribution was the work for the big Barnum & Bailey parade rejuvenation of 1903. Undoubtedly the highlight of the book for parade wagon historians are the photographs of Robb and his staff of carvers working on Asia, Europe, American, Africa, the Phoenician Galley, Egypt, and Chivalry as well as the Columbus-Pocahontus Bandwagon and the Japanese Tableau built for Pawnee Bill's Wild West. These photos are a rare find and it is unlikely that they will be available in any other medium in the foreseeable future. — Richard E. Conover, 22 December 1970.

Foreign Circus Records

Two new foreign circus records have made their appearance on the American market, one from France and one from England. The French record is titled *Vive Le Cirque*, by the Circus-Music Orch. directed by Jack Jay. It is on the Barclay label, #920074. There are eleven selections, and while this is not in the same class with ANY of Merle Evans' recordings, it is still unusual and interesting and has some excellent numbers.

Side one opens with the oft done *Entry of the Gladiators*, but this version is one of the best. I would guess that the band has about 15 members, but not being a musician it is hard to say. Second number is *Dance of the Japanese Lanterns*, which is mostly waltz and not a very Oriental sounding, tho it was composed by a Japanese. Next is *Trisch-Trasch Polka* by Strauss, a popular number with Continental circuses and very nice. Then an original, *Saida-Bango*, in the exotic mood with Latin beat. The *Cowboys Galloping* is a novelty thing, by no means a true gallop. Finally the *Radetzky March*, which is a standard Liberty Horse march used by many foreign shows, and well played here.

Side two opens with a march *Blaze Away*, very good and I have no record of it being recorded before. Next is a waltz, *Rose-Mousse*, rather a concert type arrangement but could be used for a flying act. The next is my favorite, *Parade of the Camels*, and it is a gem. An original by the conductor,

then *Cubana Jungle*, a latin exotic and again very Circusy. Final march is *Under the Double Eagle* which is a very familiar number to most march fans, but again I could not find it on any of my circus records and I have just about everything ever recorded.

The one main difference in this band and our American circus bands is the use of the Xylophone and the glockenspiel. They are used sparingly and never as featured instrument. I would recommend this record to any serious fan of circus music. It sells for \$5.98 and I imagine would be available only in very large record stores, tho any dealer should be able to order it.

Unfortunately I do not yet have a copy of the British record but expect one any day. I do not even know the label but the code letters and number are MFP 1337. The title is *Billy Smart's Circus* and the adv. says "recorded live in the Big Top, presenting in sounds and music the glamour, excitement, thrills and fun of the Greatest Show on Earth, featuring Billy Smart's Circus Band". Band is conducted by Ken Griggin and it is difficult to tell from the adv. copy if the "sound effects" are real or typically phoney as has been done so often in the past. The cover screams Circus with five color action photos taken on the show. Kent Ghirard

RB Earnings Increases by 97%

Who says the circus is dying? The Ringling-Barnum Circus issued a statement covering the first nine months revenue of the corporation showing an increase in gross revenues of 26%. The gross was \$16,618,242 and the net earnings were \$1,293,987.

The Red and Blue units played 71 cities, 13 more than in 1969.

Ringling Circus Museum To Triple Size

On November 5, 1970, the Trustees of the Ringling Museums in Sarasota, Florida, approved plans to redesign and remodel the Ringling Museum of the Circus. The Florida State Legislature has already appropriated the funds.

The first phase will take place in 1971-72, with the other in 1972-73.



New Year's Greetings

To Circus Historical Society Members
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Festival
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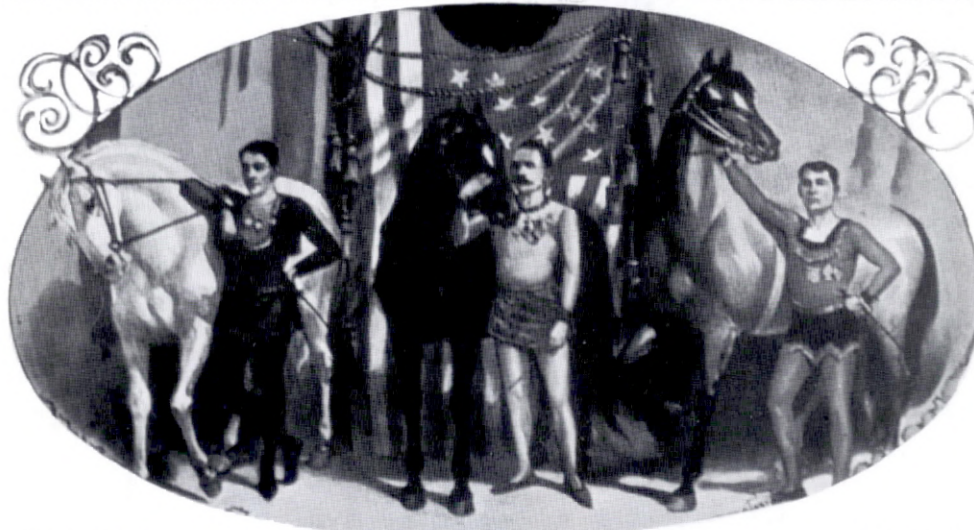
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